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I ENCOUNTERED A POLAR BEAR.

# ARCTIC ADVENTURES

BY

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AUTHOR OF "GREAT AFRICAN TRAVELLERS," "DIGBY HEATHCOTE,"  
"SHIPWRECKS AND DISASTERS AT SEA," ETC.



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# ARCTIC ADVENTURES.

## CHAPTER I.



I HAD often dreamed of icebergs and Polar bears, whales and rorquals, of walruses and seals, of Esquimaux and Laplanders and kayaks, of the *Aurora Borealis* and the midnight sun, and numerous other wonders of the arctic regions, and here was I on board the stout ship the *Hardy Norseman*, of and from Dundee, Captain Hudson, Master, actually on my way to behold them, to engage in the adventures, and perchance to endure the perils and hardships which voyagers in those northern seas must be prepared to encounter.

Born in the Highlands, and brought up by my uncle, the laird of Glenlochy, a keen sportsman, I had been accustomed to roam over my native hills, rifle in hand, often without shoes, the use of which I looked upon as effeminate. I feared neither the biting cold, nor the perils I expected to meet with. I had a motive also for undertaking the trip. My brother Andrew had become surgeon of the *Hardy Norseman* and we were both anxious to obtain tidings of our second brother David, who had gone in the same

capacity on board the *Barentz*, which had sailed the previous year on a whaling and sealing voyage to Spitzbergen and Nova Zembla, and had not since been heard of. I was younger than either, and had not yet chosen my future profession; though, having always had a fancy for the sea, I was glad of an opportunity of judging how near the reality approached my imaginings, besides the chief motive which had induced me to apply to our old friend Captain Hudson for leave to accompany Andrew.

I had undertaken to make myself generally useful, to act as purser and captain's clerk, to assist in taking care of the ship when the boats were away, and to help my brother when necessary, so that I was generally known as the "doctor's mate."

The *Hardy Norseman's* crew consisted of Scotchmen, Shetlanders, Orkney men, Norwegians, and Danes. The most notable among them was Sandy Steggall, the boatswain, a bold harpooner, who possessed a tongue—the second mate used to say—as long as a whale spear, which he kept wagging day and night, and I got no little insight into the particulars of our future life by listening to his yarns.

We had not been long at sea, when one night, it having fallen calm, I went forward, where I found the watch on deck assembled, Sandy and two or three others holding forth in succession, though the boatswain, by virtue of his rank, claimed the right of speaking the oftenest. Wonderful were Sandy's yarns. He told how once he had been surprised by a bear, when, as he was on the point of being carried



SANDY STEGGALL'S YARNS.

off, he stuck his long knife into bruin's heart, and the creature fell dead at his feet. On another occasion, when landing on the coast of Spitzbergen, he and his companions found a hut with three dead men within, and others lying in shallow graves, the former having buried the latter, and then died themselves, without a human soul near to close their eyes. Again, he had come upon the grave of an old shipmate who had been dead twenty years, whose features, frozen into marble, looked as fresh as when first placed there, the only change being that his hair and beard had grown more than half a fathom in length.

Yarn after yarn of shipwreck and disaster was spun, until I began to wish that David had not gone to sea, and that we could have avoided the necessity of going to look for him.

With the bright sun-light of the next morning I had forgotten the more sombre hues of his narratives, and looked forward with as much eagerness as at first to the adventures we might meet with.

That afternoon I had occasion to go into the hold, accompanied by the boatswain and another man carrying a lantern, to search for some stores which ought to have been stowed aft, when, as I was looking about, I fancied I heard a moan. I called the attention of the boatswain to it. We listened.

"Bring the light here, Jack!" he said to the seaman, and he made his way in the direction whence the sound proceeded. Presently, as he stooped down, I heard him exclaim—

"Where do you come from, my lad?"

"From Dundee. I wanted to go to sea, so I got in

here," answered the person to whom he spoke, in a weak voice.

"Come out then and show yourself," said Sandy.

"But that's more than I can do!" was the answer.

"I'll help you then," returned the boatswain, dragging out a lad about my own age, apparently so weak and cramped as to be utterly unable to help himself.

"We must carry you to the doctor, for we don't want to let you die, though you have no business to be here," observed Sandy, with a look of commiseration. He afterwards remarked to me, "I did the same thing myself, and I couldna say anything hard to the puir laddie."

The boatswain at once carried the young stranger up on deck. The captain had begun to rate him well for coming on board without leave, but seeing that he was ill fit to bear it, he told me to summon the doctor, who was below.

I called Andrew, who returned with me to the deck.

"What's your name?" asked the captain, while Andrew was feeling his pulse.

"Ewen Muckilligan," was the answer.

As I heard the name, I looked more particularly than before at the young stowaway's features, and recognised an old schoolfellow and chum of mine. Both his parents being dead, he had been left under charge of some relatives who cared very little for him.

"He only requires some food to bring him round, but the sooner he has it the better," observed Andrew.

With the captain's permission, I got him placed in my berth, where, after swallowing a basin of broth,



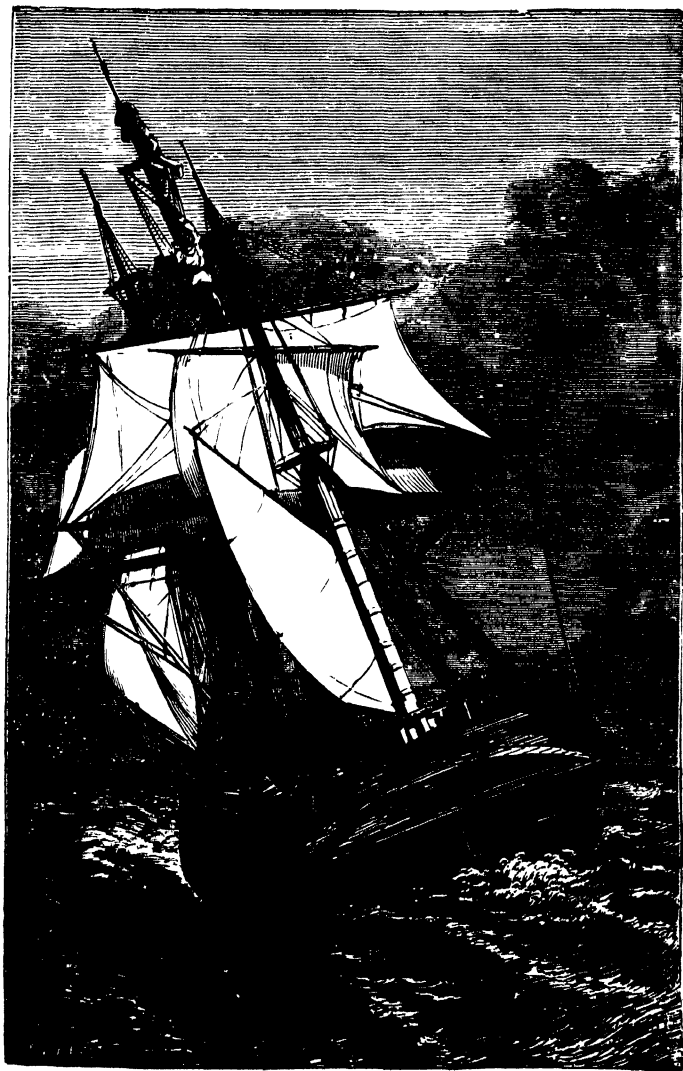
he fell asleep. By frequent repetition of the same remedy, he was able, after a couple of days, to stand on his feet, when the captain administered a severe lecture, telling him that he must send him back by the first vessel we might fall in with. Ewen, however, begged so hard to remain, that the captain promised to consider the matter.

"I may as well make a virtue of necessity, for we are not at all likely to fall in with any homeward-bound craft," he afterwards observed to Andrew.

Hearing this, I told Ewen that he might make his mind easy, that if he had determined to be a sailor he had now an opportunity of learning his profession, though he would gain his experience in a very rough school.

As Ewen was in every sense a gentleman, he was allowed to mess with us; for which permission I was very grateful to Captain Hudson, as most captains would have sent him forward to take his chance with the men. He soon proved that he intended to adhere to his resolution. On all occasions he showed his willingness to do whatever he was set to, while he was as active and daring as any one on board.

We were forward one evening, talking to the men, after they had knocked off work, the second mate having charge of the deck, the captain, first mate, and Andrew being below, when it was suggested that we two should try who could first reach the main truck. One was to start from the fore-top, the other from the mizen cross-trees. We were to come down on deck and then ascend the main-mast. We cast lots. It was decided that Ewen should start from the fore-top, I



**THE RACE TO THE MAIN TRUCK.**

from the latter position. The second mate liked the fun, and did not interfere. We took up our positions, waiting for the signal—the wave of a boat-flag from the deck. The moment I saw it, without waiting to ascertain what Ewen was about, I began to run down the mizen shrouds; he in the meantime descended by the back stay and was already half up the main rigging on the port side before I had my feet on the ratlines on the starboard side. When once there I made good play, but he kept ahead of me and had already reached the royal-mast, swarming up it, before I had got on the cross-trees. As he gained the truck he shouted “Won! won!”

I slid down, acknowledging myself defeated, and feeling not a little exhausted by my exertions. Judging by my own sensations, I feared that he might let go and be killed. I dared not, as I made my way down, look up to see what he was doing. Scarcely had I put my foot on deck than he stood by my side, having descended by the back stay.

The crew applauded both of us, and Ewen was greatly raised in their estimation when they found that he had never been before higher than the main-top.

Sandy Steggall, the boatswain, however, who soon afterwards came on deck, scolded both of us for our folly, and rated the men well for encouraging us.

“What would ye have said if these twa laddies had broken their necks, or fallen overboard and been drowned?” he exclaimed.

We had, I should have said, four dogs on board, all powerful animals; two were Newfoundland dogs, one

was a genuine Mount St. Bernard, and a fourth was a mongrel, a shaggy monster, brought by our captain from Norway. They were known respectively as Bruno, Rob, Alp and Nap.

We had crossed the Arctic circle, sighted the coast of Norway; and, with the crow's nest at the mast head, and the boats all ready, we were approaching the latitude where we might expect at any hour to fall in with ice. We had already seen several rorquals or finners; but those mighty monsters of the deep, the largest species of the whale, it was considered unadvisable to attack, as they afford comparatively little oil and are apt to turn upon the boats and destroy them.

"There she spouts! There she spouts!" shouted the captain from the crow's nest, which he or one of the mates had occupied continually.

In a few minutes the boats were in the water, and the watch below came tumbling on deck, carrying their clothes with them. As I could pull a good oar, I got a seat in one of the boats. We were in chase of the true whale, which can easily be distinguished from the rorqual by the mode of its spouting. Marking the spot where it sounded, we had hopes of getting up to it the next time it should rise to the surface.

We lay on our oars waiting anxiously for its appearance. Presently up it came half a mile off. We gave way with a will. As we approached the monster, our harpooner, Sandy, throwing in his oar, got his gun ready. He fired, and in a moment we were fast. The sea around us was broken into foam, and we were covered with spray as the creature

dived, dragging out the line which flew over the bollard at a rate which would soon have set it on fire had not water been thrown upon it. Immediately a staff, with the Jack at the end, was raised in our boat as a signal that we were fast, and the other two boats came pulling up to our assistance. Two lines were drawn out, and the boat was dragged along at a rapid rate, sending the water flying over her bows. At length the pace slackened and we were able to haul in our line until the whole of one and part of the other was again coiled away in the tubs. By this time the other boats had reached us. First one on one side, then on the other, got close enough to fire two more harpoons into the body of the monster, besides which several lances were darted into it. Again the whale dived, leaving the surface covered with blood and oil, but it was only for a short time. Now again rising, she lay almost motionless, while we pulled up and plied her with our deadly lances, trying to find out the most vital parts. Then there came a cry of "Back! back! all of you!"

We had barely time to escape from beneath her flukes, with which she furiously lashed the water, until, her strength exhausted, she floated a lifeless mass.

A jack was stuck into her body and we made chase after a second whale which had just before appeared, and after a pretty severe fight we succeeded in killing it. We had now to tow our two prizes alongside the ship, already a considerable distance off, the wind being too light to enable her to beat up to us. As only one of the whales could be brought



THE CAPTURED WHALE.

alongside at a time, the last we killed was taken in tow by the other boats, while we remained with the first which we had struck.

"Come, lads," said Sandy, "we will take our fish in tow, and get as near the ship as we can. The weather looks a bit threatening, and the sooner we are alongside the better."

We did as he advised, though we made but little progress. We had not gone far when another whale was seen spouting in an opposite direction to the ship. The temptation to try to kill it was too great to be resisted, and, regardless of the threatening look of the weather, casting off from our prize we made chase. The whale sounded just before we got up to her, but we knew she would rise to the surface again before long, and we lay on our oars waiting for her appearance.

"There she spouts, there she spouts!" cried Sandy, and we saw, not a quarter of a mile off, our chase.

Again we gave way. As we got close to the monster Sandy stood up with his gun ready. He fired, following up his shot with his hand harpoon. The lines ran out at a rapid rate until the ends were reached and we had no others to bend on.

Instead of sounding, the whale swam along the surface, dragging the boat after her right in the wind's eye, while the foam in thick masses flew over us. The sea was getting up, and soon not only spray but the tops of the waves came washing over the gunwale. Still our only chance of winning the prize was to hold on, and we hoped, from the exertions the whale was making, that its strength would soon be

exhausted. I looked astern. The ship was nowhere to be seen, nor could I distinguish the flag of the other whale. Our position was critical, and we had to depend entirely upon ourselves. At length the whale began to slacken its speed, and we began to haul in the lines. Sandy got another gun ready, and had half-a-dozen lances at hand to dart into the back of the monster when we should get up to it. We were within half-a-dozen fathoms when, suddenly raising its huge flukes, down it went again, dragging out the lines.

Suddenly the man whose business it was to attend to the coil of the hand harpoon gave a loud cry. Before anyone could stop him he was overboard, disappearing in an instant under the water. It was no use cutting the line, and, unless by a miracle the whale should return to the surface, his fate was sealed. Out ran the lines, but a few fathoms remained in the tubs.

"Get the axe ready, Tom," said Sandy to the man who had taken the other poor fellow's place. In vain he attempted to take a turn round the bollard, to check the monster's descent; each time that he did so the bows dipped, and it seemed as if the boat must inevitably be drawn down, but as he let the line out her bows rose. Still the hope of obtaining the whale made him hold on. We might also recover the body of our shipmate; that he should be alive we knew was impossible. The line ran out, it was near the bitter end. I sprang to the after-part of the boat to assist in counter-balancing the pressure forward. But this did not avail, already the water was rushing



over the bows. Two sharp blows were given. The whale was loose. We might yet, however, recover the lines, as the wounds the monster had received must ultimately prove mortal.

Again we took to our oars to keep the boat's head to the sea, while we watched for the reappearance of the whale which we knew must soon rise to the surface. We had been too eagerly engaged to pay attention to the appearance of the weather. It had now, we found, become very much worse than before. Even should we kill the whale we could not hope to tow it to the ship. With bitter disappointment we had to acknowledge that our shipmate's life had been uselessly lost and our own labour thrown away, while we could only hope against hope that the weather would again moderate and that we should fall in with the whale we had before killed.

We had now to consider our own safety, and to try to get back to the ship. We knew that she would have beat up to the boats which had the whale in tow. We had the wind in our favour, but to run before the fast rising seas would soon be perilous in the extreme. It must be done, however, for we had come away without food or water, and hunger and thirst made us doubly anxious to get on board.

Already the sun had set. We had been a far longer time away than we had supposed. Night came down upon us. The boat's compass feebly lighted by the lantern would, however, enable us to steer a proper course. We bent to our oars, but, unaccustomed to pull in so heavy a sea, I had great difficulty in keeping mine moving. Every instant it seemed as if we

must be overwhelmed by the foaming billows which rolled up astern.

Sandy had taken his place at the steering oar, and with cheering words urged us to continue our exertions; but all hands by this time were pretty well knocked up with what we had previously gone through.

We tugged and tugged away; now a sea roared up on one side, now on the other; now we plunged down into a deep gulf from which it seemed as if we should never rise. I had supposed it impossible that a boat could live in such tumultuous waters. Not a star could be discovered over head, while around we could only dimly discern dark liquid masses capped with hissing foam. How earnestly I longed for daylight and quiet, and to be once more on the deck of our ship! I knew too how anxious my brother would be. Though tumbled and tossed, the boat still continued to float. Hour after hour passed by, they seemed to be days or weeks. We had been pulling I fancied all night, and expected daylight every moment to appear, when Sandy exclaimed—

“Hurrah boys, there’s the ship’s light. We shall get safe on board now.”

Although we could see the ship’s light, we could not be seen from her deck, and she might be standing away from us. Sandy anxiously watched the light, then altered our course more to the eastward, whereby the sea being brought on our beam rendered our condition even more dangerous than before. Sandy assured us, however, that we were getting nearer; and at last, believing that we might be heard, we all

shouted together at the top of our voices, forgetting that the rattling of the blocks and dash of the sea against the sides of the ship would have rendered our cries inaudible. I had for long been pulling on mechanically, scarcely knowing what I was about, when I heard Sandy again shout out, "Heave lad, heave," and looking round I saw the bowman standing up with a rope in his hand. It had been hove to him, but the end must have been slack. We had now to regain the ship which was flying from us, but could that be done, I asked myself.

Again Sandy cheered us up by exclaiming, "She'll heave to, lads ; never doubt it, she'll heave to."

Of that I feared there was but little chance, for her dark hull quickly again disappeared, and I could no longer see even the least glimmer of light. Sandy, however, declared that he could, and on we pulled as before. I should have said that we passed another long hour before we once more saw the hull of the ship, and her tall masts swaying to and fro against the sky. It was no easy matter to get alongside, half full of water as was our boat. Thanks to the skill of Sandy, we at length succeeded in hooking on, and the boat was hoisted on board, by which time I was more dead than alive.

My brother and Ewen carried me below, and I was speedily restored by a basin of hot broth. Ewen had begun to tell me what had happened to the other boats and the whale, when, eager as I was to know, I dropped off fast asleep.

In the morning, when I awoke, I found a furious gale raging, and the ship hove to. It was a mercy

we had got on board when we did, for if not we should in all probability have been lost. Andrew told me that the whale had been towed up alongside, but that, before half the blubber had been cut off, they had been compelled to cast it adrift. The captain intended to wait where we were in the hopes of again getting hold of it, and of picking up the other whale we had killed, and perhaps also the one we had wounded.

I had now to learn what a down-right gale at sea really is. I had thought it would be good fun, but I found it very much the contrary. The stout ship was tossed about like a shuttle-cock; the masts, yards, bulkheads, and every timber in her, creaked and groaned; the leaden seas capped with foam, now rose high above the bulwarks, now sank down forming a yawning gulf, while the stout ship was tossed from one wave to the other like a shuttle-cock. As my duty did not require me to be on deck, I lay down, fearfully tired, intending to go to sleep; but, before I dropped off, the captain came into his cabin to look at his chart. I asked him to tell me our position. We had been drifting some hours to the northward, and Bear Island, which lies between Spitzbergen and Norway, was not far off.

While he was sitting at the table with his compasses in his hand, I felt a sudden shock, and, though for an instant the ship appeared to be motionless, she trembled throughout every timber. Then came a sound like the roar of thunder, followed by a fearful crashing and rending of planks, while a sudden heave sent me and everything loose in the cabin to leeward.

The captain rushed on deck, and I sprang up after him. My first impression was that the ship was going down, and that the waves were already rolling over her.

A tremendous sea had struck her on the beam and came pouring down on our deck like a cataract sweeping all before it. Wreck and destruction met my view. The quarter-deck was cleared of rails and bulwarks, stanchions, binnacle, and the greater portion of the wheel, while one of the quarter boats, having been torn away from the davits, the wreck hung in two fragments battering against the side.

A piercing shriek reached my ear. It rose from a poor fellow whom I could see floating away to leeward on the binnacle, well knowing that no human power could assist him. Another also who had been on deck was missing, struck probably by fragments of bulwarks, and carried away.

The captain took in at a glance the state of things, and then issuing his orders in a firm tone, raised confidence in the men. A long tiller was shipped to replace the shattered wheel. The wreck was cleared. Spars were lashed to the stanchions to serve as bulwarks, and in a wonderfully short time comparative order was restored.



## CHAPTER II.



THE gales of those northern regions during the summer though sharp are generally short. As soon as the weather moderated we made sail, to try and pick up the whales we had killed, or if unable to find them to attack others

The carpenter and his crew meantime were busily employed in repairing damages and building another boat in lieu of the one which had been lost. A sharp look-out was kept from the crow's nest for the dead whales, or for any fresh whales which might be seen spouting.

"I am afraid it is like looking for a needle in a haystack," observed Sandy to me. "Still there is nothing like trying; one or two may be seen, to be sure, but as to falling in with many, it's more than I expect we shall do, for they are mostly, do ye see, gone northward among the ice."

Just as Sandy had delivered himself of this opinion, the second mate from the crow's nest shouted:—

"There she spouts! There she spouts!" and pointed to the north-east.

The loud stamping of the men on deck soon

summoned those who were below. The first mate took charge of one boat, and the boatswain, with whom I went, of the other. Away we pulled as fast as we could lay our backs to the oars, hoping to get up to the whale before she sounded, but we were disappointed; down she went, and we had to wait for her reappearance. It was uncertain where she would next come up. We saw the mate's boat paddling to the northward.

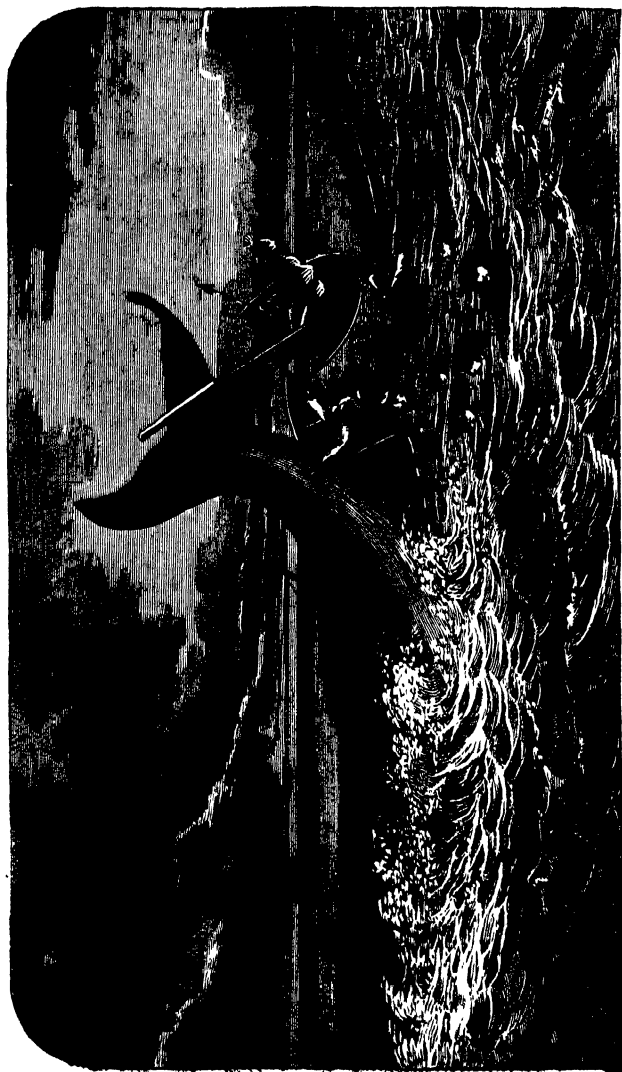
"She'll not come up there," observed Sandy, steering to the west.

We kept our oars slowly moving, ready to give way at an instant's notice. The result proved that neither was right, for the whale appeared between the two points.

"There she spouts!" shouted Sandy, and away we pulled as if our lives depended upon our exertions. Our boat was somewhat nearer the whale than was the other, and Sandy was eager to have the honour of winning the prize. The whale was evidently one of the largest size. It had discovered our approach and seemed prepared for the encounter. Notwithstanding this we pulled on, Sandy standing in the bows with his gun ready to send his harpoon into the monster's side. He fired and, as the line ran out, seizing his spear, he was in the act of thrusting it not far from where he had planted his harpoon, when he shouted:—

"Back of all! Back of all!"

It was indeed time, for Sandy had observed by the movements of the whale that it was about to throw itself out of the water. Before we had pulled a



AN UNEQUAL ENCOUNTER.



couple of strokes it rose completely above the surface, and, rapidly turning, down came its enormous flukes on the very centre of our boat, cutting it in two, as if a giant's hatchet had descended upon it. Those who were able sprang overboard and swam in all directions for our lives. Two poor fellows in the centre of the boat had been struck by those ponderous flukes, and, without uttering a cry, sank immediately. While Sandy, with a spear in his hand, still clung to the bows until jerked off by a second blow, which sent that part of the boat flying into the air.

As I swam away I looked round with a horrible dread of seeing the whale open-mouthed following me; but, instead, I caught sight of its flukes raised high in the air, and down it dived, carrying out the line still fast.

Sandy shouted out to us to swim back to the wreck to try and secure the end, that the mate's boat might get hold of it when she came up; but just then the tub itself floated away and, as may be supposed, we were all eager to get hold of whatever would assist to float us. Some clung to the fragments of the wreck, others to the oars, until rescued by the mate's boat, which quickly reached the scene of the disaster. Had not our two shipmates lost their lives, this accident was too common an occurrence to make us think much about the matter. No sooner were we on board than we pulled away in the direction we thought the whale would reappear, knowing that it must soon come to the surface again to breathe.

As I lay exhausted in the bottom of the boat I heard the cry of "There she spouts!" and I saw the

crew rowing lustily away. I soon recovered sufficiently to look about me. The mate approached cautiously, to be prepared for any vicious trick the whale might play. He fired, and I heard the men shout:—

“A fall, a fall!”

Several lances were also stuck into it. The creature dived. A second line was bent on, but before it ran to the end it slackened, and we hauled up ready to attack the whale with our lances.

By this time a third boat had come up, and when the whale appeared it was attacked on both sides. After some violent struggles it turned over on its side. It was dead.

Recollecting the loss of our two shipmates the shout of triumph was subdued, and the crews refrained from singing as usual as we towed the prize towards the ship, which was beating up to meet us.

I now saw the whole operation of “flensing,” or cutting off the blubber. A band was first formed round the animal, between the head and fins, called the “kent.” To this a series of tackles, called the “kent-purchase,” was fixed, by which means, with the aid of the windlass, the body of the whale could be turned round and round. The blubber was then cut off by spades and large knives, parallel cuts being made from end to end, and then divided by cross cuts into pieces about half a ton each. These being hoisted up on deck were cut into smaller portions and stowed below in casks. The whole part of the blubber above water being cut off, the body was

further turned round, so as to expose a new portion; and, this being stripped off, another turn to the body was given. The kent was then unrolled, and, the whalebone from the head being extracted, the remainder of the mass, called the "kreng," was allowed to go adrift, affording a fine feast to the mollies, which in countless numbers had been flying round us, ready to take possession of their prize. From its power of wing and its general habits, the fulmar of the north may be likened to the albatross of the southern hemisphere. Why the fulmar is called molly I could not learn. Sandy assured me that many sailors believe the birds to be animated by the spirits of the ancient Greenland skippers.

"For because, do ye see," he remarked, "the mollies have as great a liking for blubber as those old fellows had."

The fulmars having gorged themselves flew away towards the nearest ice to the northward, in which direction we now steered, the captain having abandoned all hope of recovering the lost whales. Scarcely had we got the blubber stowed away than it again began to blow hard, but we were still able to steer northward, a constant look-out being kept for the ice.

We were standing on when I heard "Hard to star-board," shouted, and on looking ahead I saw a huge mass of ice, of fantastic shape, rising out of the water, of sufficient size, had we touched it and caused it to overturn, to have crushed the ship. Scraping by we found ourselves almost immediately afterwards surrounded by countless masses, differing greatly in size,

most of them being loose drift-ice. Our stout ship, however, still continued her course, avoiding some masses and turning off other pieces from her well-protected bows. Every mile we advanced, the ice was becoming thicker. Still on we went, threading our way through the heaving masses. At length, above the ceaseless splashing sound, a roar increasing in loudness struck our ears. It was the ocean beating on the still fixed ice, and ever and anon hurling fragments against it with the force of battering rams.

"The sea is doing us good service," observed the mate, "for it will break up the floes."

It seemed to me much more likely that the ship would be dashed to pieces. When, however, the fixed ice could be seen from the crow's nest, we hove to, to wait for calmer weather. There we lay, tossed about with the huge slabs and masses of ice grinding together or rolling over each other around us, and threatening every moment to come crashing down on our deck, while reiterated blows came thundering against our sides.

Night came on, and shortly afterwards the snow began to fall thickly, covering our deck, while from one side of the heavens the full moon burst forth from amid the clouds, lighting up the scene, increasing rather than diminishing its horrors. The snow circled in thick eddies round us, the sea foamed and raged, and masses of ice in the wildest motion were swept by; the timbers strained and creaked, while the ship shook under the reiterated shocks, sufficient it seemed to rend her into fragments, but the ice which had collected round her prevented her destruction.



**"THE FULL MOON BURST FORTH FROM AMID THE CLOUDS."**

Ewen and I occasionally went on deck, for to sleep was impossible. "Are you sorry you came to sea?" I asked.

"No," he answered, "I wanted to know what a storm was like, and now I shall be satisfied, but I shall be glad when it's calm again."

When I awoke a change had come over the scene. I went on deck, a perfect calm prevailed. All round us were piles of ice. The blocks and masses which stood out against the sky were cast into shades, while the level floes sparkled like silver in the rising sun. Far away to the southward we could still see the ocean heaving slowly. In a short time, however, leads between the bergs and floes opened out, the water being of the colour of lead. All hands were called up to make sail, and we stood on forcing our way between the floes, until open water was reached, though in every direction lofty icebergs and extensive floes were still to be seen. Many of the bergs were of the most fantastic form and brilliant colours. Some had arches of vast size, others caverns worn in them within which the ice appeared of the brightest blue and green, curtained with glittering icicles, all without being of stainless white.

I should fill up the whole of my journal were I to attempt to describe all the wonders and beauties of the Arctic regions.

Our object, when whales were not to be met with, was to kill walruses, and for this purpose our boats were provided with the necessary gear. We had in each boat six harpoon-heads, and four shafts of white pine. Each harpoon had fastened to its neck one end

of a line, twelve or fifteen fathoms long, the line being coiled away in its proper box. It is not necessary to have longer lines, because the walrus does not frequent water more than fifteen fathoms deep, and even should the water exceed that depth, owing to the pressure above him he is unable to exert his full strength.

Besides these harpoons, we had four lances nine feet in length, to which the iron barbed heads were strongly fixed. As we were approaching the ice, we caught sight of two hundred black heads, at least, swimming rapidly along. They were morse, or walruses, and Andrew declared had got young with them who would retard their progress. Three boats were instantly lowered with their proper gear. I went with Sandy, who was an experienced walrus-hunter, and at once took the lead. We made the boat fly through the water, while ahead was the herd of walruses bellowing, snorting, blowing, and splashing. The herd kept close together, now diving, now reappearing simultaneously. One moment we saw their grizzly heads and long gleaming white tusks above the water, then they gave a spout and took a breath of fresh air, and the next moment their brown backs and huge flippers were to be seen and the whole herd were down. Sandy stood up in the bows with his harpoon ready for a dart. In a few seconds up again came the walruses, and we were in their midst. The harpoon flew from Sandy's hand deep into the body of the nearest walrus. He then seized another harpoon and darted it into a "junger" which came swimming incautiously by. Its mother, hearing its plaintive cry, rushed towards us with her formidable



IN EVERY DIRECTION LOFTY ICEBERGS AND EXTENSIVE FLOES WERE STILL TO BE SEEN.





tusks, endeavouring to recover it ; but before she had time to dig them in the side of the boat a shot from one of our guns and a plunge from Sandy's spear had terminated her existence. The "junger," which was only slightly wounded, uttered a whimpering bark, when a score or more of walruses swam fiercely towards us, rearing their heads out of the water, snorting and blowing, ready to tear the boat to fragments. Several were killed before the calf had ceased its cries, when they prudently retired to a distance to escape our bullets and the thrusts from our spears. We had secured six walruses; for, though others were wounded they sank.

So well satisfied was the captain with the result of our chase, that, soon after the blubber and skins had been stowed away, he ordered the two boats to be prepared for another chase. Andrew, who wished to see the sport, went in the boatswain's boat, and Ewen got leave to accompany us, he being now able to pull an oar well.

We could see the land to the westward, and, by keeping as close to it as the ice would allow, we hoped to fall in with plenty of game. We accordingly pulled away to the west where the sea was tolerably open. Our wish was to find the animals asleep on the ice where they could be more easily attacked and secured than in the water in which they have the means of exerting their great strength to the uttermost, whereas on the ice they were at our mercy.

The days were now increasing in length so much that we often forgot how many hours we had been out. Though the Arctic summer was approaching the

weather continued uncertain. We had killed two ordinary-sized walruses, when a third, an enormous fellow, was seen sleeping not far from the edge of the floe. We approached cautiously, hoping to kill him, or at all events to get a harpoon well secured in his body. Once he lifted up his head and winked an eye, but did not appear to apprehend danger. With bated breaths we urged the boat slowly forward. My brother fired and the bullet went crashing into the animal's head. Next instant Sandy, leaping out, drove his harpoon into its body. It was fortunate that he succeeded in doing this, as the walrus by a violent effort rolled itself over into the water rapidly carrying out the line, the end of which was secured to the bollard.

Sandy had barely time to leap back into the boat, when away we went, towed by the walrus, the bow pressed down in a way which threatened to drag it under water. Sandy stood ready, axe in hand, to cut the line to save us from such a catastrophe. Suddenly the line slackened. The walrus dived and shortly afterwards came up again.

My brother fired and missed. The animal disappeared. We felt far from easy, for we knew that there was a great chance of its rising directly under the boat which it might too possibly capsize, or it might tear out a plank with its formidable tusks, when it would follow up the proceeding by attacking us as we struggled in the water. Happily, however, exhausted by the wounds it had received, it rose a short distance ahead, when a thrust from Andrew's spear finished its career. We hauled it up on the ice

by means of the tackles we carried for the purpose, to denude the huge body of the skin and blubber.

We were so busily engaged in the operation, that we did not perceive the approach of a thick fog which quickly enveloped us, while the wind began to blow directly on the ice. It became important therefore to get a good offing to avoid the risk of the boat being dashed to pieces. We now steered in the direction we supposed the ship to lie, but as we could not see fifty fathoms ahead we knew well that we were very likely to miss her. The wind increased and the sea, getting up, threatened every instant to swamp the boat.

"It must be done," cried Sandy; "heave overboard the blubber and skins, better get back to the ship with an empty boat than not get back at all."

His directions were obeyed and everything not absolutely required in the boat was thrown out of her. Notwithstanding this there was still the danger of being cast on a mass of floating ice, or of having one come toppling down on us, when our destruction would have been certain. We did our utmost to keep the boat's head to the sea, as the only hope we had of saving her from going down.

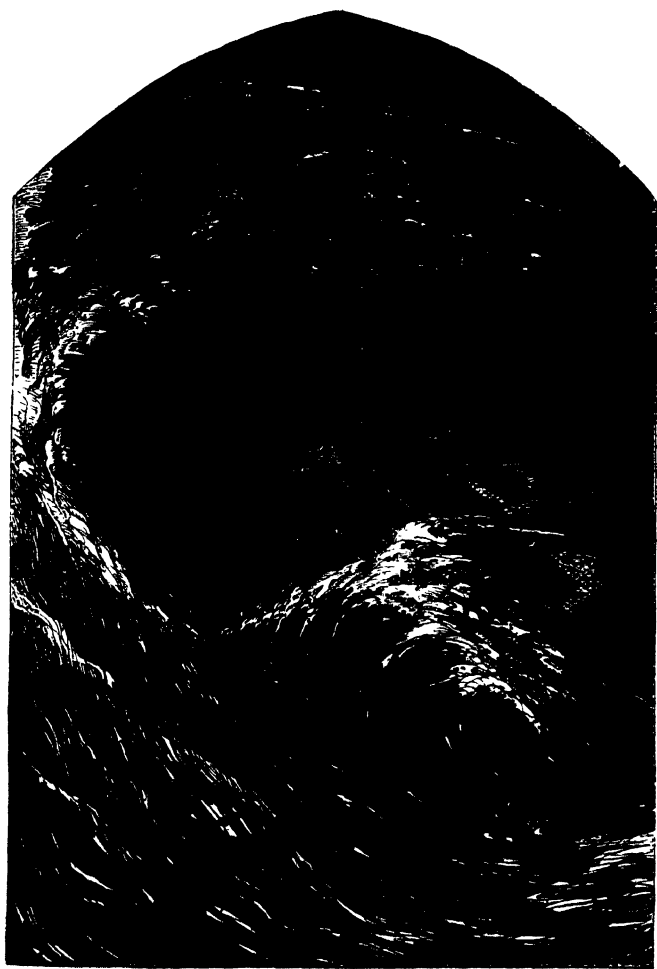
What had become of the other boat we could not tell. We looked out for her, but she was nowhere visible. Our ship, too, was in no small peril, for she might—should she be unable to beat off the solid ice—be dashed against it and knocked to pieces.

All night long we pulled on, amid the heaving waves and tossing floes, sometimes narrowly escaping being thrown on one of them. We could hear them

crashing and grinding together as one was driven against the other. I, for one, did not expect to see another sun rise, nor did probably any of my companions. Few words were exchanged between us. Sandy sat at the steering oar, keeping an anxious look-out for dangers ahead and occasionally cheering us up to continue our exertions.

"Pull away, lads, pull away; as the boat has kept afloat so long, there's no reason why she shouldn't swim till the gale is over," he cried out. Just then, however, a heavy sea came rolling up, and down it came right over our bows, almost filling the boat.

"Never fear, bale it out, doctor," cried Sandy; and my brother and Ewen set to work, and, happily, before another sea struck us, got the boat free. None of the rowers, however, could venture to cease pulling for an instant; not that we made much progress, but it was all-important to keep the boat's head to the sea. Looking up some few minutes after this, I fancied that I saw a peculiar light away to leeward. I was just going to draw Sandy's attention to it, when I discovered, close under our lee, a huge iceberg towering up towards the sky. Had we been on the opposite side, it would have afforded us some shelter from the gale, provided it did not topple over. As, however, we were to windward, we had the greatest difficulty in escaping from being thrown upon it. Sandy's voice sounded almost like a shriek as he urged us to pull away, while he kept the boat off from the furious surf, which, with a sound of thunder, beat upon the lower portion of the berg. We did not need urging, for we all saw our danger. Though the sea



"A HEAVY SEA CAME ROLLING UP, ALMOST FILLING THE BOAT."

tumbled about much as before, we felt in comparative safety when the berg was passed. Still, other bergs or floes might have to be encountered, and we knew not at what moment we might come upon them. How anxiously we all wished for daylight I need not say. At length it came, presenting a wild scene of confusion around us, the ocean as turbulent as ever. We had been mercifully preserved through it, and we trusted that our buoyant craft would carry us back to the ship. She, however, was not to be seen, but we made out, far off, a speck, now on the top of a wave, now disappearing in the trough, which Sandy declared was the other boat. Our spirits rose somewhat, but we were getting exhausted from hunger and thirst, for we had no food nor water with us, nor if we had could we have spared time to eat and drink.

As day-light increased we made out the land, for which Sandy steered, as the other boat was apparently doing. The thought of setting foot on shore, and obtaining a short rest, encouraged us to renew our exertions. The ice had been driven away from us, and formed a barrier some distance off from the land. We were thus able to make better progress than during the night. We could now distinguish the other boat clearly over the starboard quarter.

Mr. Patterson, the second mate, evidently considered—as did Sandy—that it would be hopeless to try and get on board the ship until the gale was over. Perhaps he feared, as we did, that she had been knocked to pieces on a floe or against one of the icebergs floating about. As we approached the land we saw that it was fringed with rocks and masses of ice,

between which it would be perilous in the extreme to make our way. Still, unless we could get round to the lee side, it must be done. Sandy stood up to look for the shore. A bay presented itself where the sea broke with less force. We stood on rocks and ice rising up amidst the seething waters, now on one side, now on the other. Sandy steered between them with consummate skill. Mr. Patterson's boat followed at some distance. A foaming wave came sweeping up, on the summit of which we were carried forward until we could hear the boat's keel grate on the beach.

"Jump out, jump out!" cried Sandy to the men forward, who obeyed, and, carrying the painter, dragged the boat some way up the strand. We all followed, and, putting our shoulders to the gunwale, had her safe out of the power of the waves. We then ran to assist our shipmates, whose boat had suffered more than ours, and was almost knocked to pieces; indeed, on examining her, we found, to our dismay, that to make her fit for sea she would require more repairs than, without tools, we were able to give. We had thus only one boat in which to make our escape from the island, and she was insufficient to carry the whole of the party. Should the ship not appear, therefore, we should be compelled to remain, and perhaps have to endure the hardships of an arctic winter with very inadequate means for our support. We were, however, on shore, and at all events safe for the present; but we were without food, fuel, or shelter, except such as our boat would afford us. Water we could procure from the fragments of ice-





"THE MEN DRAGGED THE BOAT SOME WAY UP THE STRAND."

bergs driven on the beach, but we were unlikely to obtain either walruses or seals, as they would have sought the shelter of the lee side of the island; even the birds had deserted the shore on which we were driven. We determined, therefore, to make an excursion across the island, hoping, either to reach the other side, or fall in with reindeer or other animals.

Several of the men, overcome with fatigue, preferred remaining under the boats, waiting for the food we might obtain. My brother, Sandy, Ewen, and I, with the second mate and Charley Croil, a fine young lad of whom I have not yet spoken, set off; the mate, my brother, and I having our rifles, and Sandy his harpoon and lines, while the others carried lances. Though feeling somewhat weak from our long fast, hunger urged us on; and in spite of the roughness of the ground, making our way to the westward, we soon lost sight of our companions on the beach.



### CHAPTER III.



WE found tramping across the rough ground very fatiguing, for in most places it was soft and spongy, except where we crossed more level ridges of bare rock. Already the grass was beginning to grow, and flowers were opening their petals, although most of the streams were partially frozen and we could only cross them by wading halfway up to our knees in slush. As yet we had not got sufficiently near to any deer to give us a chance of obtaining some venison, for which we were longing with the appetites of half-starved men, nor had we been able to catch any birds.

"We shall have to get over to where the walruses are, and it will be hard if we don't get enough then to fill us up to the throats," observed Sandy, "though we may chance to find fowl rather scarce."

On we trudged, mile after mile, drawing in our belts and keeping up our spirits, urged forward by hope. At last my brother Andrew, who was leading, reached the top of a high rocky ledge, which lay directly across our course, when he turned round and made a signal to us with his hand to approach cautiously. I followed, Sandy came next. We soon



“ANDREW MADE A SIGNAL TO US TO APPROACH CAUTIOUSLY.”

climbed up the rock, when we saw before us a low shore and lofty hills in the distance. The ice was in great part melted. Near the shore were countless wild fowl, assembled in large flocks,—swans, geese, ducks, snipes, terns, and many others. Scrambling down the rock, we were soon blazing away right and left. In a few minutes we killed a sufficient number of birds to afford us an ample feast. The question was how to cook them, as the stems of the largest trees were less in circumference than our small fingers. We managed, however, to collect a sufficient quantity of moss and twigs to make up a diminutive fire, at which we browned, though we could not thoroughly cook, our fishy-tasting fowl. We were, indeed, too hungry to be particular.

After we had satisfied our own hunger, we began to think of our companions. Two of the men volunteered to return with a supply of the birds sufficient for the crew, while the remainder of us continued our route to the west. We had to make a wide circuit round the end of a lake. As may be supposed, we kept a bright look-out for deer. We had gone some distance, when we observed a couple in a small valley where the snow had melted. To have a better chance of securing the reindeer, we divided; Mr. Patterson, Sandy, and Ewen making their way along the side of the hill, while my brother and I proceeded up the valley, concealing ourselves among the rocks or in the gullies, hoping thus to get within shot of the deer. The wind came down the valley, so that we were to leeward, and had some prospect of getting close to the game without being perceived. Greatly

to our satisfaction we saw that the animals were coming towards us, browsing on their way. We, therefore, knelt down behind a rock, waiting until the deer should approach. At length we could hear the sound they made, munching the herbage as they tore off the moss and grass. At this Andrew rose and fired at one, and I, imitating his example, aimed at the other. Greatly to our disappointment, as the smoke cleared away, we could see both the deer scampering off up the valley, but one soon fell behind the other. It had been hit in the shoulder. Slower and slower it went; we made chase, but it still kept a long way ahead of us. We both reloaded as we ran, hoping to overtake it and get another shot, should it not in the meantime come to the ground. Greatly to my delight, I saw the deer which I had shot suddenly stop, when presently over it fell. The other held on for some time longer, when that too rolled over. We had a long chase, though we scarcely knew how far we had gone. On looking round we could nowhere see our companions. I fired off my rifle to attract their attention, as we wanted them to assist us in cutting up the deer and to carry back the venison. Scarcely had I fired than I saw, coming out of a hollow in the side of the hill, a huge white monster, followed by two smaller creatures, which I at once knew must be a bear and her cubs. Her intention was evidently to appropriate our venison, an object which we were anxious to defeat. Andrew had seen her, and stood with his rifle ready for an encounter. I reloaded as rapidly as I could. We had neither of us shown ourselves first-rate shots,

and I was afraid that my brother might miss the bear, and that she might seize him before I could go to his rescue. The animal sat upon her haunches sniffing the air; then, once more dropping down, she approached, resolved to carry off the deer or attack us should we attempt to prevent her. Andrew allowed her to get within twelve paces or so, when he fired at her head. The bear, instead of dropping as I expected, to my horror rushed towards my brother.

"Leap out of the way," I shouted, for I dared not fire as he then stood, lest I might hit him.

He followed my advice, when I levelled my rifle, knowing that his life, and probably my own, might depend upon the accuracy of my aim. The bear, growling terrifically, came on, and when about three yards from me rose on her hind legs, stretching out her formidable paws, about to spring and grasp me in her deadly embrace. I pulled the trigger, and as I did so jumped back with all the agility I possessed, knowing that should my shot fail to take effect, I might—even though she were mortally wounded—be torn to pieces by her teeth and claws before another minute was over. Great was my thankfulness when I saw her huge body sink slowly to the ground, where she lay without moving a limb; still, as I thought it possible that she might not be dead, I joined Andrew, who was reloading a few paces off.

The bear cubs, who had followed her a short distance behind, now came up, and began pulling away at her body, not understanding why she did not move. We were soon convinced that she was perfectly dead. What was now to be done with the

little animals? When they found that she would not move, they began biting at her savagely. However, they soon scented out the deer, and, while we were employed in cutting them up, came to us and eagerly devoured the pieces we threw to them, they not showing the slightest fear of us, nor anger at the way we treated their mother.

We had now more meat than we could carry away, even with the assistance of the rest of the party; and, as they did not appear, we each took a heavy load and prepared to set off.

Andrew, who was anxious to take the little creatures on board, suggested fastening some lines we had in our pockets round their necks to lead them with us, but no force would compel them to budge. I tried, however, to get them to move by putting a small piece of meat a short distance from their noses, when they both darted forward to catch it. I then gradually increased the distance between the pieces of meat, and got them out of sight of their mother.

Following the traces left by the wounded deer, we were enabled to make our way with more certainty than we should otherwise have done. At last we caught sight of our shipmates, who were not a little astonished at seeing our two small shaggy companions, and highly delighted at finding that we had brought so fine a supply of meat.

On hearing of the abundance we had left behind, they wanted us to return with them; but we, having done our duty, preferred resting in a sheltered spot on the side of the hill, while they followed our tracks to bring away some more venison and bear's flesh.



In the meantime the little cubs gambolled together at our feet, occasionally coming up to get a suck at a piece of venison.

The party at length arrived, each man staggering under as much meat as he could carry. They all sat down that we might consult in what direction we should proceed. Mr. Patterson wished, as we had gone thus far, to continue on to the lee side, where he believed that a harbour would be found into which the ship might possibly have put, for he was certain she would not, if she could help it, approach the other side of the island. Should such be the case, we hoped to be able to get the boats round, either by the shore or by the ice. We had still three men who had accompanied us, and the boats' crews would by this time be in want of food. Mr. Patterson accordingly sent back Sandy and two of them, each carrying a load of venison and bear's flesh. He directed the boatswain, after provisioning the men, to search along the shore, and ascertain if there was any possibility of getting the boat over it.

"We had better take the little bears with us," said Sandy; "they'll amuse the men, and, if the worst comes to the worst, we can eat them." Saying this, and adopting our plan, he threw a small piece of meat before the noses of the little animals, who at once rushed forward to seize it, not aware that it was part of the flesh of their parent.

"You'll be gorging yourselves, ye little gluttons," observed Sandy, and, fastening a piece of meat to the line, he dragged it after him, whisking it away the moment the creatures got up to it. Thus enticed,

they parted from us, their first friends, without the slightest sign of regret, eagerly following Sandy and the men. As it was important not to expend more powder and shot than we could help, we carried a larger supply of meat than we should otherwise have done, so that we might have food enough to last us for several days if necessary. Our progress was therefore somewhat slow, and it was not until the sun had set that we caught sight of the ocean, or rather of the fields of ice and bergs which covered it, with here and there a line of open water, showing that it was breaking up and being driven away from the coast. Descending from some high ground which we had been traversing, we found ourselves on the shores of a deep bay, on the northern side bordered by cliffs and rocks, but with a sandy beach at the inner end. It was already partially open, and although small floes floated about, some remained attached to the shore.

"This is just the place I hoped to find," observed Mr. Patterson. "If we are compelled to remain here we shall be able to obtain a supply of fish, while it is the sort of spot walruses and seals are likely to frequent."

We had now to look out for a sheltered nook in which we could pass the night.

"We shall be able to have a fire too," I remarked, as I pointed to a quantity of drift-wood, which lay above high water-mark.

"You and Ewen and Croil collect it then," he answered, "while the doctor and I search for a sheltered spot."

While picking up the wood I was separated from my companions, and found myself going in the direction Mr. Patterson and my brother had taken.

Passing round some rocks, I saw several dark heads in the water, which I at once recognised as walruses. As I felt sure they would not land to attack me, I went on without hesitation. Presently I heard a shout. Looking round the rock I saw Mr. Patterson, with his rifle clubbed, engaged in what seemed to me a desperate conflict with a huge walrus. Though he was retreating, the creature, working its way on with its flappers, pressed him so hard that it was impossible for him to turn and fly. I immediately unslung my rifle, which I had hitherto carried at my back, but dared not fire for fear of wounding him. I hurried on, endeavouring to get to one side of the walrus so that I might take sure aim, when, to my horror, the mate's foot slipped, and down he came with great force. The next instant the huge monster was upon him, and was about to dig its formidable tusks into his body. In another moment he might be killed. I was still nearly twenty paces off, but there was not a moment to be lost. Praying that my bullet might take effect, I lifted my rifle and fired. Then, without stopping to see the result of my shot, I dashed forward in the hopes of still being in time to drag the mate out of the way of the monster's terrific tusks. Thankful I was to see that the walrus was not moving, but still it might with one blow of its tusks have killed the mate.

Shouting to Andrew, who was, I supposed, not far off, I sprang forward. The walrus was dead, and so

I feared was the mate. Not a sound did he utter, and his eyes were closed. It was with the greatest difficulty that I could drag him from under the body of the walrus. Again and again I shouted, and at last Andrew appeared, his countenance expressing no little dismay at what he beheld.

"He is still alive," he said, after he had examined the mate. "The walrus has not wounded him with its tusks, but has well-nigh pressed the breath out of his body, and may possibly have broken some of his ribs. We'll carry him to a dry cave I have just found, in which we can light a fire, and I hope he'll soon come round. Get Ewen and Croil to assist us." I hurried along the shore and summoned them. We all four managed to carry the mate to the cavern. While Andrew attended to him, Ewen, Croil and I brought the drift-wood we had collected, and getting some dry moss from the rocks to kindle a flame, we soon had a fire blazing.

Andrew reported unfavourably of the mate. Two of his ribs were broken, and his legs fearfully crushed.

"Much turns upon his having a good constitution to enable him to get over it," observed my brother. "He has been a temperate man, and that's in his favour, but I wish that he was safe on board, as he requires careful nursing, and that's more than he can obtain in this wild region."

A restorative which the doctor always carried, at length brought the mate somewhat round, and he was able to speak.

"Have you seen anything of the ship?" was the first question he asked.

"No, we did not expect her so soon," answered Andrew; "she will come here in good time, I dare say!"

"Then where are the boats?" inquired the mate.

"One is very much damaged," said Andrew; "we must wait for a favourable opportunity for bringing the other to this side of the island. In the meantime you must try and go to sleep. In the morning we will see what is best to be done."

The poor mate asked no further questions, but lay back in an almost unconscious state, while Andrew sat by his side, endeavouring to alleviate his sufferings.

The rest of us, having cooked some venison, made a hearty supper, but the mate was unable to eat a morsel. Andrew decided on sending Ewen and me back the next morning to obtain a cooking pot, in which he might make some broth for the mate, as well as to bring the sail of the damaged boat, which might assist to shelter him from the cold. Should it be found impossible to get the boat round to the bay, he thought it would be best to leave her there, and to let all the men come across, bringing the gear of the two boats, and as much of the wood of the wrecked one as they could carry. His idea was to build a hut, or to make the cavern habitable. It was agreed that we should catch as many bears and walruses as we could, so that we might have materials for constructing the hut as well as for covering ourselves.

"It will be wise at once to make preparations for the winter. We must provide shelter, food, clothing, and fuel, and this will fully occupy all hands until the cold weather sets in," said Andrew. "Had we been

cast on shore here at the end of the summer, we should in all probability have perished ; but now I hope that we shall be able to support existence until another spring, when we may expect the appearance of a ship to take us off."

Our plans being arranged, Andrew told us to lie down and try and get some sleep, saying that he would keep watch in case any prowling bear should pay us a visit, besides which he wished to attend to the mate. I begged him, however, to let me sit up for a couple of hours, promising to call him, should I fancy that our injured companion required his assistance. He at last consented. In a few minutes he and the rest of the party were fast asleep. I carefully made up the fire, then, after some time, feeling drowsy, I took my rifle, and went outside the cavern. The night was tolerably light, indeed the darkness in that latitude was of short duration. As I looked in the direction where the body of the walrus lay, I fancied I saw two or three white objects on the rocks. At first I thought that they were piles of snow or ice ; but, watching them attentively, I observed that they were moving, and I had no doubt they were bears attracted by the body of the dead walrus, on which they expected to banquet. I now regretted that we had not had time to carry off the skin, which would of course be torn to pieces and rendered valueless. I was much tempted to try and shoot the bears, which I might easily have done while they were feasting, but I considered that I ought not to leave my post, and I did not like to awake Andrew, who required all the rest he could obtain. I therefore returned to the

cave and sat down by the fire, thankful for the warmth it afforded. When I judged I had been on watch a couple of hours, I aroused my brother.

“You were right in not trying to shoot the bears, for even had you killed one the others might have set upon you, and we cannot afford to lose another of our party,” he said. “Lie down now, as you have a long journey before you ; and I shall be glad if you can bring the men over here before another night sets in.” It was broad daylight when my brother awoke me and the rest. The mate appeared somewhat better, and, as he had no feverish symptoms, Andrew expressed his belief that he would recover. Having breakfasted and done up a portion of the cooked venison for provisions during our journey, Ewen and I set off, leaving Croil to assist my brother in taking care of the mate. Andrew charged us not to expend our powder on birds, or we might have shot as many as we required. Every hour they were arriving in large flocks on their way to still more northern regions, where they might enjoy the long summer day without interruption. I will not describe the journey, which we managed to accomplish in about six hours. Sandy, who came to meet us, reported that the men were behaving well, thankful for the food we had sent them ; but, as far as he could judge, it would be impossible to get the boat round for the present, either over the ice or across the land. All hands therefore were ready to obey the directions Andrew had sent them. While Ewen and I rested, they made up the loads each man was to carry. As to launching the boat among the rocks which fringed that side of the

island, it was clearly impossible unless in the calmest weather, without the risk of her being knocked to pieces; for the sea continually rolled in huge masses of ice, which with thundering sound were shivered into fragments. It seemed surprising that we had escaped, when we looked at the spot where we had landed.

"We are all ready, and if you and Ewen think you can trudge back by the way you have come, we'll set out at once," said Sandy.

"All right," we answered, springing to our feet and taking our rifles, with a few articles—all the men would let us carry—we led the way.

The men, however, had not taken any of the shattered boat, or oars, or spars, and it would, therefore, be necessary to make another journey to bring them across. The other boat was turned bottom upmost, out of the reach of the highest tide, with the things we had to leave placed under her. We took longer to perform the journey back than we had occupied in coming, as the men, with their heavy loads, could not proceed as fast as Ewen and I had done. On approaching the bay we looked out for Croil, whom we expected to see on the watch for us. He was nowhere visible. We shouted to give notice that we were near, but no reply reached us.

"He is probably in the cave assisting the doctor," observed Ewen. "I hope the mate is not worse."

On getting near the shore, however, we saw my brother, who had just come out of the cave. He waved to us to hasten on.

"Thank heaven you are come!" he said. "I am very anxious about young Croil. He went away a



couple of hours ago to collect drift-wood, and has not returned. I could not leave the mate, who still continues in a very precarious condition, to look for him, and I fear that some accident has happened; probably he has been attacked either by a walrus or a bear, and, if so, I fear that he will be added to our list of casualties."

"We must find him at all events," I answered. "Should he have been attacked by a bear, we shall discover some traces which will show what has happened to him."

The men, having deposited their loads, tired as they were, dispersed in all directions. Sandy, Ewen, and I went to the northward under the cliffs. Every moment I expected to see the mangled remains of the poor lad, or traces of his blood, should a bear have carried him off. Of one thing we felt sure, that he would have kept as close as he could to the beach, where he might hope to meet with drift-wood. Before long, however, our progress was stopped by cliffs which jutted out into the sea, though we saw that there was a continuation of the beach farther on. We had, therefore, to climb up and try to find a way down again to the level of the water. It was no easy task to climb the cliff, but we accomplished it at last. We went on for some distance, but so precipitous were the cliffs that it seemed impossible that we should be able to descend with any safety. Every now and then we peered over them, and as I was doing so I thought I saw an object lying close to the base some way on. I felt almost sure that it was a human being, while not far from it was what looked

like the wreck of a boat. That it was poor Croil we could have little doubt, and that he had been killed by a fall from above appeared too probable.

Sandy, who was of this opinion, told Ewen and me to wait while he hurried back to obtain a coil of rope which he had brought from the boat, as also the assistance of some of the other men should they have returned. Ewen and I accordingly went on, and, carefully looking over the cliff, to our sorrow discovered that it was indeed our poor shipmate. That he had fallen from such a height without being killed seemed impossible.

"Take care that we do not share his fate," I observed to Ewen, as I got up to ascertain if there was any less precipitous part near at hand, by which we could descend without waiting for the rope.

As far as I could discover there were no marks on the edge of the cliffs to show from whence he had fallen. Going on a little further I found a narrow ledge, which apparently sloped downwards. Very likely he had attempted to make his way by this ledge to the shore. From its extreme narrowness I felt that it would be folly to trust myself to it, and that I should probably fall as he had done.

While looking about I heard Ewen exclaim—

"He is moving, I saw him lift his hand!" He then shouted out: "Hullo! Croil, we are coming to help you."

It was a great relief to know that the lad was alive, though it made us still more anxious for the return of Sandy. At last he appeared. Now came the question, Who should descend? It was a hazardous task.

Sandy insisted on going down, but I felt that I would much rather descend than have to hold the rope.

"No, no," said Sandy, "I'll trust you. I'll stick this stake into the ground, and if you hold on to the upper end the rope will be firm enough."

While we were securing the rope as Sandy proposed, a man with another length of rope came running towards us. It was fortunate he brought it, for the first was not sufficiently long to reach the bottom. Our preparations were speedily made, and Sandy, with the activity of a sailor, sliding over the edge of the cliff, glided down by the rope until he reached the spot where Croil lay. I fancied that I heard him shout out for help, so I told Ewen to hold on to the stake, and, taking hold of the rope, slid down as Sandy had done. I saw him, as I reached the bottom, supporting Croil in his arms.

"I did not want you to come, Hugh, but as you are here, you can help me in getting up the laddie. There is still life in him, but he has had a shaking which might have broken every bone in his body, though I cannot discover that any are broken. We must hoist him up gently, for he cannot bear any rough handling, that's certain."

I suggested that we should make a cradle from the wreck of the boat which had tempted Croil to try to reach the beach.

Sandy had some small line in his pocket; I also had another piece, and Dick Black—the man who had come to our assistance—had brought a whole coil, which he threw down to us. We soon formed a cradle, in which we placed the lad, securing it to the



SANDY SUPPORTING CROIL IN HIS ARMS.

end of the rope. We had, besides this, lines sufficient to enable me to stand below and assist to guide it in its ascent. Sandy then swarmed up to the top, and he and our two companions began to hoist away while I guided the cradle from below. I was thankful to see Croil at length safely placed on the top of the cliff. The rope was then let down, and making a bow line in which I could sit, I shouted to the rest to haul away. I felt rather uncomfortable as I found myself dangling in mid-air, for fear the rope should get cut by the rocks, but I reached the top without accident. I was thankful to find that Croil had come to himself, though unable to describe how he had fallen.

“We must mark this spot, to come back for that wood; it will be a perfect god-send to us, for we shall want every scrap of fuel we can find,” I observed.

The cradle enabled us to carry Croil without difficulty to the cave, where my brother at once attended to him.

Wonderful as it seemed, not a bone in his body was broken, nor had his spine received any injury, which Andrew at first thought might be the case. He thus hoped that the lad might get round and in a short time be as well as ever. He was far more anxious about the mate, who still remained in a precarious condition.

Supper over and a watch being set, we all lay down inside the cave, with our feet to the fire which blazed in front of it. And thus passed the third night of our residence on the island.

## CHAPTER IV.



SANDY and my brother had now become the real leaders of the party, as the mate was too ill to issue orders. We speedily built a hut with sods and stories, and roofed it with the boat's sails. It proved a far more comfortable abode than the cavern. We also collected all the drift-wood we could find, including that of the wrecked boat which had so nearly cost Croil his life. On examining the quantity, however, we saw that it was utterly insufficient to last us through a winter. My brother, therefore, proposed that we should cut turf and dry it during the summer, and advised that the hut should be much increased in size, with two outer chambers, by which the inner room could be approached and but a small quantity of cold air admitted. A lamp of walrus' blubber or bear's grease would be sufficient to warm it at night, provided that the walls were thick enough to keep out the cold. Our stock of powder being small it was necessary to husband it with the greatest care, and we therefore agreed to shoot only such animals as were necessary to supply ourselves with food.

I killed three deer and a bear which one night paid

us a visit, and Sandy killed two walruses which he found asleep on the rocks. From the appearance of the ice Sandy hoped at length that he would be able to bring round the boat. For several days a huge mass had been seen floating by, carried on apparently by a strong current, while that in the bay had either melted or had been blown out by the wind. He accordingly set off with the boat's crew, carrying provisions for several days' consumption. Ewen and I meantime made our way northward to explore the part of the island we had not yet visited. We saw that it was of far greater extent than we had supposed, and that we should perhaps have to camp out two or three nights if we persevered in our attempt.

As Andrew had charged us to return before nightfall we were about to direct our steps homewards, when Ewen's sharp eyes discovered a peculiar looking mound at the top of a headland some distance to the northward. As it would not delay us more than an hour we hurried on. Below the headland was a bay, on the shores of which we saw a hut. Could it be inhabited? If so we might meet with some one whose experience of the country would be of the greatest use. We were considerably disappointed on entering the hut to find it empty. It had apparently been for a long time deserted. Without delay we climbed up the top of the headland. We examined the cairn carefully, and found that it was built round and contained a bottle, on opening which I discovered a paper having a few lines apparently written with the burnt end of a stick. They were in English, but so nearly illegible that { it was with difficulty I could read

them. What was my surprise when I made out the words—

“Left here by the whaler *Barentz*. Saw her drift out to sea, beset by ice. Fear that she was overwhelmed, and all on board perished. Spent the winter here. A sloop coming into the bay, hope to be taken off by her.

“DAVID OGILVY.”

Here was a trace of my long-lost brother; what had since become of him? Had he got off in the sloop and returned to Europe, or had she been lost? Had the former been the case, we should have heard of him before we sailed. We hurried eagerly back to discuss the subject with Andrew. It was dark before we reached the hut. We talked and talked, but could arrive at no conclusion. Andrew feared for the worst. The boat had not arrived, indeed we scarcely expected to see her that day. Next day passed by and she did not appear. Two more days elapsed. We were constantly on the look out for her. I proposed going over to try to ascertain what had happened. The mate was getting somewhat better, and I took Andrew's place that he might go out and take some exercise while in search of a deer. I was talking with Mr. Patterson, who spoke hopefully of getting away before the winter commenced, when Ewen rushed into the hut exclaiming—

“A sail, a sail! She's standing for the bay.”

“Go and have a look at her,” said Mr. Patterson;  
“I was sure we should get off before long.”



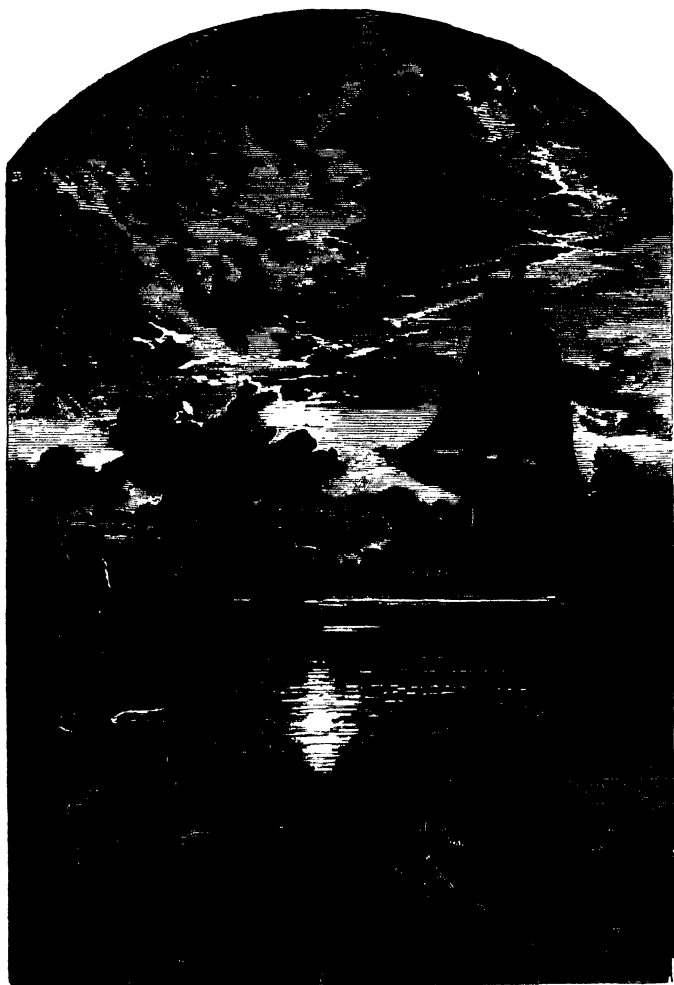
I rushed down to the beach, where I found the rest of the party collected, gazing at the approaching vessel.

She was the *Hardy Norseman*, trim and taut. There was no doubt about the matter. On she came, gliding over the now smooth ocean. A shout of joy burst from our throats. All our troubles were over, as we thought. She stood fearlessly on, evidently piloted by one who knew the harbour, and at length came to an anchor. Her sails were furled immediately, and a boat approached the shore.

As she got nearer we saw that the boatswain was steering. His boat had then got off and fallen in with the ship. Such, indeed, he told us, as he sprang on the beach, had been the case. Had he not done so she would have passed on, supposing that we had all been lost; for, although short-handed, the captain had determined on prosecuting the fishery until the weather compelled him to return.

Carrying the mate and Croil, who—as Andrew said—had turned the corner, we were soon on board, heartily welcomed by all hands. Our hut and store of fuel were left for the benefit of any other unfortunate people who might be cast on the island, but the meat and skins were, of course, carried with us.

As the sea was now open to the northward, we sailed slowly on, the boats frequently being sent in to shoot walruses or seals, of which vast quantities were seen on the rocks and floating ice. We were now off the coast of Spitzbergen. Passing some islands, we pulled on shore in expectation of obtaining some walruses. We had killed several, when we saw



THE "HARDY NORSEMAN."

among the rocks a number of eider ducks which had just laid their eggs. The first mate and boatswain, who were in command of the boats, ordered us to land with the boat-stretchers in our hands, when we rushed in among the birds, knocking them over right and left. While they lay stunned, we were directed to pull off the down from their breasts. We were thus employed for several hours, during which we collected an enormous quantity of eider down, as well as a vast number of eggs. On returning on board, the skipper sent us back for a further supply. As we obtained nearly four hundred pounds of down, and as each pound is worth a guinea in England, the skipper was well pleased with our day's work, more so than were the poor ducks, deprived of their warm waist-coats and eggs at the same time. Happily the stern ice saves them from frequent visits of the same description.

As we were pulling along we caught sight of a walrus asleep on a rock. Without disturbing the animal, Sandy and two other men landed. His harpoon was soon plunged into the side of the walrus, while the end of the line still remained in the boat. A fierce struggle commenced. The walrus, rolling into the water with head erect and tusks upraised, came swimming towards the boat, regardless of the spears thrust at it, and had almost gained the victory, when a shot through its head put an end to its existence. The next day, having again landed, we killed a number of seals by concealing ourselves behind the rocks on the shore, while they lay enjoying the warm sun on the ice. Andrew, Ewen, and I were some-

what ahead of the rest of the party, when we caught sight of a bear lying down under the shelter of a hummock. We were intending to stalk him, when



we saw a seal sunning itself upon the ice, some distance off. The bear crept from behind his place of shelter, and began to roll about as if also to enjoy the sun. The seal lifted up its head, when Bruin stopped, lying almost on his back, with his

legs in the air, and his eyes directed towards his expected prey. The seal dropped its head, and the bear began once more to move forward, again to stop and remain perfectly motionless until the seal's eyes were closed. Again Bruin advanced, when the seal, which must have been somewhat suspicious of the hairy creature, looked about it. For yet another time Bruin stopped, until, the seal's suspicions once more lulled, the bear got near enough with one leap to bound upon his prey, when, before the seal was dead, he began tearing away at its flesh. We determined to put a stop to his supper. While he was thus employed and less on the watch than usual, we crept up to him and a shot through his head prevented him from gaining the water. We thus got both bear and seal.

I forgot to mention the two young bears which had been carried on board, and had become great pets with the men. We added to our menagerie a couple of young walruses, which we caught after their mothers were slaughtered. One went by the name of Dick, the other Harry. They and the bears looked suspiciously at each other, but wisely kept apart. The walruses were somewhat of a nuisance; for, being of an independent character, they walloped about the deck, and at night roared far louder than did the bears, which, frightened at the loud noise, slunk into their kennels. We fed the walruses on gruel, which seemed to suit them very well. At length, one evening while Andrew and I were seated in the cabin, as Captain Hudson was on the point of going on deck, we heard a tremendous noise, as if

some huge body had fallen down, followed by a cry and some pretty severe expressions from the skipper.

On rushing out, we found him sprawling on the floor with Master Dick, who had come rolling down the hatchway, walloping and flopping on the top of him. Having extricated the captain, who was fortunately not much the worse for his tumble, we hauled the slippery little monster up on deck, and took it to its proper resting-place—a big tub in which it ought to have been confined.

Though whales were somewhat scarce, we killed walruses and seals sufficient to satisfy the skipper, a good many bears, and a vast number of birds. We continued steering north, keeping away from the land, the sea being almost entirely open, with masses of ice and occasionally icebergs floating about. Not a creature of any sort was seen on the ice, but little auks and sea parrots in vast numbers rose and perched on the gently rippling sea.

The wind having fallen we got out lines to fish for sharks, and soon caught one twelve feet in length. It was hoisted on board by a block and tackle, when, its liver being cut out, Sandy, blowing through a tube, inflated the stomach of the creature, which was then thrown overboard. The object of this was to prevent the body from sinking, when its brethren would have devoted their attention to its remains instead of to the blubber with which the hooks were baited.

We caught several in the same way. Each liver yielded almost its entire weight of a fine fish-oil, undistinguishable from cod-liver oil, though I do not

know if it possesses the same qualities. Again a light breeze from the eastward springing up, we made further progress. A hail from the crow's nest announcing that a sail was in sight made us all look out. Having a soldier's wind we were approaching each other from opposite directions. As the stranger drew near we watched her with much interest. Captain Hudson and the first mate were examining her through their glasses.

"If that's not the *Barentz* it's her ghost!" exclaimed the captain.

"It's a ship of her size, at all events," observed the mate; "she looks as if she had spent a long time in the ice."

The moment I heard this, my heart leapt with joy at the thought that we should find our brother David on board, until I recollected the cairn and the document he had left behind him. Could he, after all, have got on board his ship, or could he have been lost while she had escaped?

As the wind was very light a boat was lowered, and Andrew and I having jumped into her pulled away that we might as soon as possible learn what had happened. We were soon clambering up the stranger's sides. On her deck stood a gaunt and famished crew. As our eyes ranged over their countenances we in vain sought that of our brother David.

"What ship is this?" was the first question we put.

"The *Barentz*," answered her captain, stepping forward.







"Is David Ogilvy on board?" inquired Andrew.

"I regret to say that he is not," answered the captain, at once quenching all our hopes. "He was on shore, when we were driven off the land and afterwards carried northward, where we were beset in the ice from which we have only just escaped. Had he been with us, the lives of some of our poor people would have been saved, and the health of all preserved."

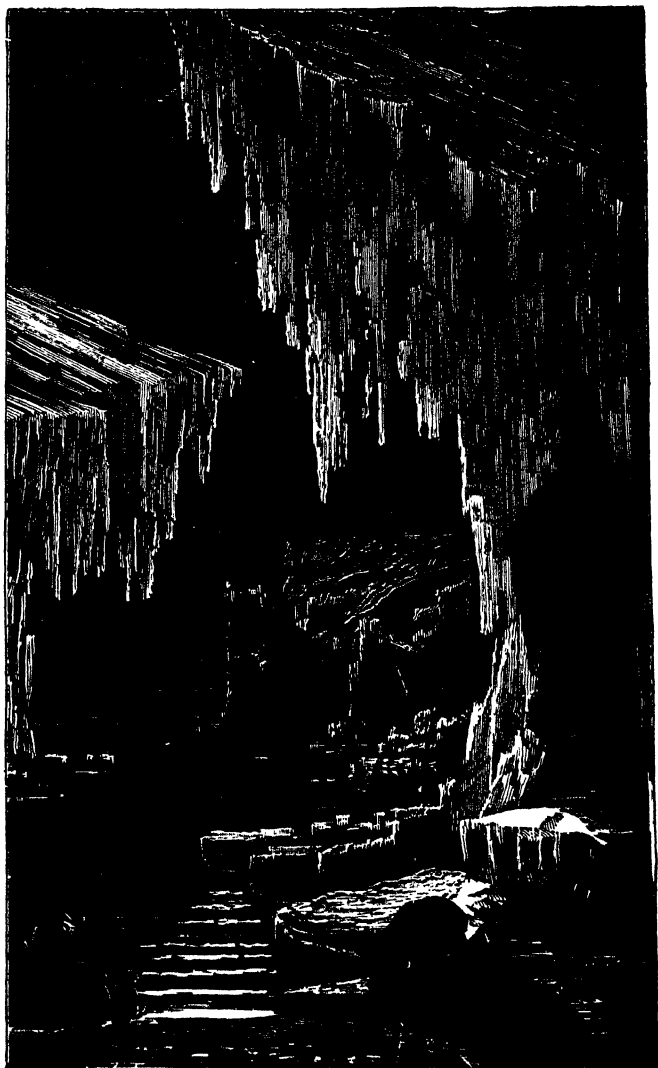
On hearing that our ship was the *Hardy Norseman*, the captain expressed his wish to come on board in our boat, all his own having been lost, or been rendered utterly unserviceable. I need not say that he received a warm welcome, while Captain Hudson promised to supply him and his crew with all the fresh provisions and antiscorbutics he could spare. The captain of the *Barentz* was much grieved on hearing of our fears of David's fate. Still, as I looked at his ship, I could scarcely hope, in her battered condition, that she would reach port in safety.

Thus, had my brother remained on board it might have been his lot to perish with all the rest. Captain Hudson suggested that he and his crew should come on board. This he positively declined doing. Having got his ship out of the ice and escaped after being shut up for two winters, he fully believed that he should be able to take her home. Andrew again went on board the *Barentz* and prescribed for the sick men among the crew. It was not until the next day, when a breeze sprang up, that we parted company, little supposing at the time what was in store for us. We now found ourselves constantly surrounded by dense

mists which made it difficult to avoid the enormous icebergs and floes, which floated on the surface of the water. Happily for us, the sea was perfectly calm, or broken into light wavelets by the gentle breeze. The ceaseless and melancholy sound produced by the waste of ice disturbed the silence which would otherwise have reigned over the ocean world.

Sad and solemn was the picture presented to us by the unbroken procession of icebergs, which, like the ghosts in Macbeth, floated by to disappear in the warmer regions of the south. Constantly, too, there came the roar of the ocean swell as it broke among the icebergs and caverns, or the splash of water like a distant cataract as it fell from the lofty summits of the bergs, mingling with the crackling noise emitted by the masses of ice as they struck each other or their summits were broken off. Sometimes an iceberg would overturn or the top come hurtling down with a crash into the sea, covering the water with foam, and sending the birds which had perched there flying in all directions to seek a more secure resting-place.

We were now never without the light of the sun. According to its nearness to the horizon, the effects produced varied greatly. During the night the sky was of a deep ultramarine, while the icebergs, clothed with a rosy hue, appeared to have gone to sleep. Even the cascades from the bergs ceased to flow, and few sounds broke the silence. Sea-gulls and divers could be seen sitting round the edge of a floe with their heads under their wings. The whole region presented a strange and weird aspect. On we sailed, the icebergs at every mile becoming more numerous



AMONGST THE ICEBERGS.



and of larger dimensions. As I looked ahead it seemed impossible that we could force our way between them, or escape being crushed by the vast masses which ever and anon came toppling down from their summits, but the desire to obtain a full ship lured us on.

As the sun rising in the heavens sent down his warm rays, we could see numerous seals basking on the floes, or on some projecting point of a berg. Some of the boats were constantly engaged in shooting or harpooning the creatures, while others were kept in readiness to go in chase of the walruses which frequently made their appearance, though we did not always succeed in getting near them, as, diving beneath a berg, they did not rise again until the opposite side was reached.

The mate and Croil were now perfectly recovered, and enabled to take a part in everything going forward. Their services were required, for, in consequence of the hands we had lost, we all had work enough to do. I went in one of the boats, whenever I could get a chance. I was bound otherwise to remain on board and assist in managing the ship while they were away. Frequently we had enough to do, as we floated among the bergs and floes, to escape those which came drifting towards us, driven on by some under-current, more than by the wind. The broken state of the ice induced our captain to believe that we should as easily get out of it as we had made our way into its midst. He was more inclined to this opinion, when we suddenly found ourselves in the open sea with scarcely a floe or berg in sight. Had we met with whales we might have cruized about in

chase of them, and not proceeded further, but only a few appeared ahead to the northward, and those we failed to kill.

"Never fear, lads," said the captain as the boats returned on board, the men looking blank at their want of success. "We shall fall in with plenty more in the course of a day or so, or it may be in a few hours, and we may still get a full ship, and be south again before the summer days begin to shorten."

The pack-ice, Captain Hudson told us, was this year much further north than he had ever known it, but he thought that a good sign, and he hoped to find lanes through which we might make our way into ponds seldom reached by whalers, where we might kill the fish faster than we could flense them.

Voyagers during the Arctic summer day require sleep as much as at other times, though often it has to be obtained at very unequal intervals. Having been awake for the best part of twenty hours, I had turned in—I don't know whether to call it one night or one day—when I was aroused by a tremendous blow on the ship's bows, which made her quiver from stem to stern. I was rushing on deck with my clothes in my hands, not knowing what might happen, when I found that she was forcing her way through a stream of ice, and that ice surrounded her on every side. A strongish breeze was blowing, and the canvas was being reduced to prevent another such encounter, which might produce serious consequences. Finding that nothing was really the matter, I quickly dived below again to put on my clothes, when I once more hurried on deck. As I was looking round my eye was

attracted by a dark object at some distance on the starboard bow. I pointed it out to the captain, whose glass was directed towards it. "It is a vessel of some sort. A Russian or Norwegian sloop. She has been nipped probably, for she seems to lie on the ice, out of the water; but whether her crew are still on board, or have made their escape in their boats, it is hard to say."

"We must go and ascertain," exclaimed Andrew; "our brother David was taken off by a vessel of that description, and for what we can tell, he may be on board."

"It will be impossible to reach her," answered the captain; "there is no lane leading in that direction. If you attempt to cross the ice it may open at any moment, giving you little chance of escaping with your lives."

Still Andrew entreated that he might go, and proposed making an expedition, three or four of us joining ourselves together by a long rope. We consulted the boatswain, who at once volunteered to form one of the party, as did Ewen and Croil. The captain, after ascending to the crow's nest to examine the ice, gave us leave, and allowed us to take one of the boats which would carry us part of the way, charging us, however, not to delay a moment longer than was necessary. Quickly procuring a long rope, we jumped into the boat and pulled ahead of the ship, along a lane which opened out to the eastward. Our further progress was soon stopped. Having fastened ourselves together at the distance of four or five fathoms, each provided with a long pole, we leapt on the ice, Sandy taking the lead, we three lighter ones followed,



and my brother brought up the rear. We had some hummocks to climb over, but generally the surface was level, and we made rapid progress, but still the sloop appeared much farther off than I had supposed. I saw Sandy try the ice when he was doubtful of its consistency, as he went along; but, satisfied that it would bear him and consequently any of us, he pushed forward.

I eagerly looked out expecting to see some people appear on the deck of the sloop. As we drew nearer I uttered a loud shout in which my companions joined, but no one replied. Could all those on board be dead, or had she, as the captain supposed, been deserted? I asked myself; and the dread seized me that we should find David frozen or starved to death. Such things had too often occurred before, and might have happened in this instance. In my eagerness I could not help shouting to Sandy to go on faster.

"More speed the less chance we shall have of getting there, my boy," he answered, stopping to strike the ice in front of him with his pole. He drove it through. "There, you and I should probably have had a cold bath," he observed as he turned aside to find more secure footing.

We had to make a considerable round to a sort of bridge, where two floes had overlapped. We crossed safely, and now the sloop appeared not a quarter of a mile ahead, her dark hull partly heeling over, and her shattered mast standing out sharply against the white back-ground. The distance was soon passed over. Once more we shouted out before we began to clamber on her deck. Sandy and I, being the first up, eagerly

looked down into her after cabin. It was half full of water. No one could be seen ; so hurrying on to the other hatchways, we peered down them. It was tolerably evident that no one, alive or dead, was there. So far, then, our worst fears were not realized.

"Look here!" said Sandy to me, "the crew may have made their escape in their boats and have been picked up by another craft. See, the sails are unbent and all the ropes carried off. If it was worth while getting a wetting we should find that nothing remains of value below, either fore or aft."

That such was the case, a further examination fully convinced us. Still Andrew and I would have been thankful if we could have discovered some traces of our brother, should this have been the sloop he had got on board. The boatswain, however, remarked that numbers of vessels of the same description came northward during the summer, that it was just as likely he had never set foot on her deck, and that we might find he had got home safe before us.

According to our promise, the instant our inspection was over, we commenced our return journey. As the ice was becoming firm, we cast off the ropes and separated from one another, each man taking his own course. I thus got to a considerable distance from my companions. I was still some way off the edge of the floe, though in sight of the ship, and could make out the boat approaching to take us off, when up started from behind a hummock a huge polar bear, which probably mistook me for a walrus or seal, and therefore its lawful prey. My first impulse was to run, instead of standing still and facing my enemy as I ought to have

done. I had very nearly gained the edge when what was my horror to see that the bear was within twenty paces of me. A glance round showed me the boat, still some way off, while my companions were at too great a distance to afford me assistance. I now did what I should have done at first, stopped and rammed a bullet into my rifle. The bear stopped also, sitting up on its haunches, to examine me more particularly. Could I have got off my shaggy coat, I would have thrown it at him, to attract his attention, for I guessed his next movement would be to bound upon me and press me in his terrific embrace. All I could do, however, was to throw my cap at him, when, dropping down on all fours, he began to smell at it. Now was my time to fire a shot which I hoped might kill him. Should I miss, I knew too well that I had not the remotest chance of escape. Mustering all my nerve, I levelled my rifle and pulled the trigger. The bullet must have gone through his brain, for, without making another move, he rolled over and giving one struggle was dead.

I should have fallen on the ice and rendered thanks to heaven for my preservation, but in reality I could not for some seconds move a muscle. I could scarcely persuade myself that the huge monster, which had just before appeared so terrible, was now a mass of flesh.

The shouts of my companions in the boat who had seen the occurrence aroused me, and, soon arriving, with the rest of the party, they hauled the huge carcase on board the boat, and we returned in triumph to the ship.

## CHAPTER V



AFTER visiting the unfortunate sloop, a fair lead appeared, with a pool of considerable size to the northward. Making all sail we stood on, hoping to find whales sporting within it. Before, however, we reached the pool the wind dropped, and the boats were sent ahead to tow the ship. This mode of progression was, however, before long rendered impossible, by the closing of the floes. We had continued to warp her along by carrying out ice anchors, and working the windlass. We looked anxiously ahead, for the lane was becoming closer and closer, and it seemed not impossible that we should be compelled to form a dock to save the ship from being nipped. Saws were got ready, and every other preparation made for cutting a space in the ice sufficient to hold the ship. At length the captain seeing that the pool itself was contracting, gave the word to commence the work. All hands were required for the task, some used the saws, and others hauled away the blocks as they were cut out. It was hard work, but no one grumbled, as our lives might depend upon our getting it accomplished in time. Scarcely was it finished,

than the floes closed, not with such force as we expected, but with quite enough to have crushed our stout ship into a pancake. Instead of such being the case, we floated free from harm in the basin we had formed. Here we were doomed to lie until the ice should open again and set us free. Some dark objects, which we guessed were seals, were seen on the edge of the pool. To employ our time, we set off to try and kill some of them.

Ewen had been eager to distinguish himself as a harpooner, and he and I went together. Observing a couple of seals, we crawled towards them so cautiously, that we got near enough, without waking them, to dart our weapons. As we rose to our feet, I struck mine with all my force into the head of the animal nearest me, almost pinning it to the ice. Ewen was not so fortunate, for although he fixed his harpoon into the animal's body, before he had time to take a turn with the line round a rough point of ice near at hand, the seal plunged into the water, and he, holding on to the rope, was dragged after it.

I shouted out to him to let go, which, as may be supposed, he right willingly did, and fortunately was able to catch hold of my line which I threw to him, when I hauled him up safe again on the ice. His first impulse was to look over the edge, hoping to recover the line, but that, with the harpoon, had disappeared.

"Thank you, Hugh, for saving my life," he said, "but I wish you could have caught the harpoon and line, for I shall be laughed at as a bungler."

I did my best to console him, and Sandy, who soon

afterwards came up, assured him that many a now famed walrus and seal hunter had commenced his career with equal want of success.



Several other seals had been killed, and the rest having been frightened away, as there was no chance of capturing any more, we commenced our return, Ewen assisting me in dragging our prize to the boat. A few hours after we got on board, once more the ice

opened, and all sail being made we stood on, our hopes renewed of being able to capture as many whales as we required.

"We shall have a full ship!" cried the captain, rubbing his hands as we lay in the pool with a whale on each side, which had been killed within an hour after we reached the open water. Others were spouting in all directions, and two boats being away, it was hoped that we should have a couple of fish ready to take the place of the others, the moment the flensing was finished. But as I had already seen the rapid way in which the ice changes its position in those regions, I was not too sanguine. Scarcely had the blubber from the two whales been stored below, than the ice was seen to be moving, and as the boats were towing up a third whale, it began to close in on us, the large pool becoming a broad lane, while other channels disappeared altogether. Notwithstanding this the whale was brought alongside, and every effort was made to flense it rapidly. Still the ice was coming closer and closer. A favourable breeze just then sprang up, and a narrow lead which ran towards an expansive pool opened out before us. By remaining where we were we might get crushed before we could flense the whale, and with great reluctance the captain ordered it to be cast off and sail made.

We had not got a quarter of a mile, when, looking astern, we saw that the spot where we had floated was one sheet of ice.

"Better luck, next time," said our skipper, who was always anxious to encourage the men.

That luck however was not for us. The lead as we advanced became blocked up with floating masses, some of them monster icebergs, amid which we forced our way until the wind dropped.

The boats were now sent ahead, some to tow, others to shove away with long poles the ice which impeded our progress. At length we reached an ice hole, when the boats being hoisted on board, we made sail, hoping to find a lead on the opposite side, but we were to be disappointed—no opening could be discovered.

We, as usual, made fast to a floe, and the captain after a visit to the crow's nest, expressed his intention of returning southward.

The announcement was received with a cheer by the crew, but there was no wind, and we had to wait for a breeze to carry us back the way we had come. That way was, however, no longer open: the pools were lessening in size, and in a few hours not a single spot of clear water could be seen.

Again and again the crow's nest was visited, but each time the same report was brought. It was very evident that we were closely beset. Still our brave captain did not despair, and promised that, should the ice open again, it would not be his fault if the ship failed to make her way through it.

The object of the voyage, for the time, was entirely forgotten, all we thought of was to effect our escape. Never for a minute night or day was the crow's nest empty, some one being always on the look-out to report the state of the ice. I frequently went aloft. Ice alone was visible in whichever way I looked:



here piled into immense masses, huge fragments of glaciers detached from the neighbouring shores either of Greenland or Spitzbergen; there broken hummocky slabs resting against each other in every variety of form; or else vast level plains, over which it appeared that a sleigh might travel for miles without impediment; but water there was none, and I could scarcely hope that that frozen expanse would ever again break up sufficiently to allow us to force our way through. We knew that at all events we should have to encounter, to the southward, the numberless icebergs and the dense floes through which we had before passed. Had we found my brother David I fancied that I should have been happy, but his fate was still shrouded in mystery, and even if we escaped we should have to return without him.

The sun now remained between two and three hours below the horizon, but, short as was the night, the holes we had bored to obtain water were frozen over in the morning. Still we hoped that an equinoctial storm might break up the ice-fields and set us free. Before, however, we had been many days in this position, a dark streak was seen to the southward.

"There's water there," observed the captain with confidence in his tone; "it may be the open ocean."

Almost immediately afterwards other tracks were seen indicating leads through the ice, and at length some appeared so near that the captain determined to open a passage through our floe to reach them by blasting and sawing. Hope revived within us that we should get through. Laborious as was the pro-



SEEKING FOR AN OUTLET.



cess, we persevered. Every fathom gained made us fancy that we were so much nearer liberty. The wished-for storm at length began to blow; the ice broke up. All the sail the ship could bear was spread, and away we steered with her head to the southward. What cared we now for the thundering blows received on her stout bows. We were determined to be free. Freedom we believed we should obtain, when to our dismay the first mate, who had gone aloft, announced a dense floe with icebergs ahead: to run against it would have ensured our destruction, and we were compelled to steer to leeward of a floe, when, furling all sail, we made fast to it. The wind falling, a dense fog came on. The sounds which reached us showed that the ice was still in violent commotion, and, in the hopes that a passage might be found, the captain dispatched two of the boats to try and find a way.

I went with the first mate. We had gone some distance, when he announced that he saw an opening, and immediately headed the boat towards it. Looking up we could see a huge iceberg towering above our heads. We had great hopes that we had entered a lane through which the ship might pass, but the thickness of the atmosphere prevented us from seeing far ahead. The mate however was convinced that he was right, and we were about to put back when again the wind began to blow with a violence far greater than before, and the sea tossed and tumbled, moving the mass of ice about in a manner which threatened our destruction. The turbulence of the waters proved that the mate was correct in regard to there being an

open sea to the southward, and we bent to our oars with all our strength, that we might return to the ship, and take advantage of the opening.

I remember that we were passing close under an iceberg, when I heard a terrific crash, and all was dark, and I knew that I was beneath the water. By a violent effort I rose to the surface, and the next instant found I was clinging to the ice. The force of the sea threw me still further on the berg until I was beyond the reach of the waves.

My position was awful in the extreme. The snow began to fall, driving against me with fearful force. I looked round but could nowhere see the boat or my companions. I alone had been saved from instant death, to perish, I believed, in a more lingering manner.

I expected ere long to drop off into the sea or to be frozen to death, still I resolved to struggle for life. How the time passed I could not judge. Every moment seemed an hour. Looking round, the fall of snow seemed lessened, and I caught sight of the ship. It appeared to me in the indistinct light that she was being dashed furiously against the berg, and that her destruction was inevitable. Should she founder I knew that my chance of life was slight indeed. I felt inclined to slip off and terminate my suffering at once, rather than attempt to cling on until overpowered by the cold; but I felt that it was my duty to prolong my existence to the last, and I did my best to secure myself by placing my feet on a ledge below me. I was conscious, however, that my mental and physical powers were both failing me. I looked

for the ship, but could nowhere see her. Had she, with my brother and all hands, foundered? Such appeared too probable. Dreadful was the thought. I was fast sinking into insensibility when I heard a hail, and on looking down saw Sandy with an ice-pole in his hand, clambering up the berg towards me. In another moment his arm was around my waist, and I knew no more until I found myself in the boat and heard my preserver shout—

“Shove off, lads, he’ll come round in time.”

Opening my eyes I saw that the boat was pulling away from the berg, but I could nowhere perceive the ship. Were my fears then for her realized? I wanted to ask Sandy, but it seemed as if the power to speak had left me. Again and again I tried, but my lips refused to move.

“What is it, laddie?” asked Sandy, perceiving the efforts I was making, as he bent down his ear for a moment to my mouth.

I managed to utter “The ship.”

“She’s all right,” he returned; “she managed to weather the berg, and is now brought up to leeward of the floe, but she had a narrow scrape of it, and we thought for certain that she’d be knocked to pieces.”

My mind felt greatly relieved, but Sandy having to attend to the steering of the boat I could not again attract his attention. I was anxious to know what had become of the boat. I did not suppose it possible that she could have escaped. After some time I managed to utter the word “boat” loud enough for him to hear me.

"It is a sad business, the poor fellows are all lost. We saw the wreck dashing against the base of the floe, and that drew our attention to you. Although we saw you at a distance we at first took you for a seal."

I asked no further questions. Some twenty minutes or more passed away before we reached the side of the ship. It was surprising that during the time I did not perish from cold. I was hoisted on board, and Andrew had me carried below immediately and put to bed with warm appliances to my feet and chest. At first I suffered great pain, but at length I began to feel a sensation of comfort and dropped off to sleep. I afterwards found that Sandy's boat had not gone back to the ship as I supposed, but that the foggy weather clearing off she had got under weigh, hoping to find some channel, and that she had discovered the one we were attempting to pass through when the mass of ice had fallen upon us.

On awaking I felt greatly recovered, but my brother would not allow me to leave my bed. I observed that he looked very grave. I inquired if anything had happened.

"The loss of the first mate and the boat's crew is a serious matter," he answered, "but our own position is critical in the extreme. We have failed to get through among the icebergs, and are now passing through a lead to the westward. It is possible that we may get out by it, but if not we shall, too probably, be beset for the winter."

"We'll get through, doctor, don't be cast down," exclaimed the captain, who had overheard my



**THE SOLE SURVIVOR OF THE BOAT'S CREW**



brother's remark. "We must keep up the spirits of the men, they're rather low at having lost so many of our ship-mates."

I knew from the sounds that the ship was still making way. Sooner than Andrew had expected I was all to rights. On once more going on deck, I found that the captain was in the crow's nest, looking out for a further lead, of which, from where I stood, nothing could be seen. There were a few water holes and openings in the ice, none of them, except the one in which we floated, being wide enough to admit the ship. The sun was sinking towards the horizon, and a night of three hours' duration was approaching. The captain on coming down ordered the ice-anchors to be carried to the floe to windward, and the ship to be made fast.

"We shall be out of this in a few hours, lads, I hope," he said. "The ice will open again soon, though at present I see no lead to follow."

Andrew sent me below soon after this. I was struck, when awaking at night, with the perfect silence which prevailed everywhere. It was evident we were not moving. The next morning when I went on deck, to my dismay I found that the pool in which we floated was completely frozen over. The crew were cutting away the ice from round the ship. It was thick enough to bear them. While they were thus employed, the floes around them began to move, emitting a rustling sound, or perhaps I might liken it to a suppressed roar. The ice in the pool cracked in all directions, and one slab was forced over another. The violence of the movement increased on every side.

We could see huge masses of ice rushing together, one being piled over the other, until the appearance of the surface became completely changed. Every moment it seemed as if the ship herself would be nipped. The ice tumbled and tossed about in a most fearful manner, filling the air with shrieks and howls, for I can liken the noise it produced to nothing else. The hitherto level floes became piled up into mountainous masses, towering many fathoms above the deck. We could do nothing to preserve the ship. The captain, believing that any moment might be her last, ordered the crew to bring their bags and the provisions which we always kept ready for such a catastrophe up on deck. Should the ship be crushed where could we go for safety? The boats would be destroyed if placed on the ice. Though we might escape to it, we could only expect to be utterly overwhelmed.

We could now see water round us in various directions, but we were too closely beset to obtain any chance, unless some lane should unexpectedly open by which we might reach one of the pools to the southward. In about a couple of hours, however, the commotion ceased, but as it did so our chance of escape lessened. The cold became greater than we had yet felt it, and every floe and mass of ice was soon securely bound together. Although we had not had time to form a dock, one made by nature had preserved us.

Next day there was no change, except that the distant lanes and pools appeared to be closed. Although our captain must have seen that there was

a great probability of our having to winter in the ice, he was unwilling to dishearten the crew by preparations until it was absolutely necessary. We, in the meantime, for the sake of taking exercise, made excursions over the ice, generally accompanied by some dogs.

Of course we carried our rifles, and Sandy, with some of the men, took their harpoons, on the chance of finding a seal or walrus on the ice or coming up to breathe through a water-hole. Ewen and Croil and I set off from the ship one morning, expecting to shoot some snow-buntings or other birds, or perhaps, should we get near a water-hole, to kill a seal. We carried provisions with us, as the air invariably made us hungry. The captain had charged us not on any account to lose sight of the ship. We had gone on and on, looking back every now and then, seeing her clearly enough. At last Ewen proposed that we should sit down under the lee of a huge hummock and take our lunch. Croil and I were perfectly willing to do this. We had finished our repast, which as may be supposed did not take us very long, when Ewen, looking up, exclaimed, "Where is the ship?"

She was not to be seen.

"Stay! I'll climb to the top of this ice-hill, and I shall soon make her out from thence," said Ewen, placing his rifle against a block of ice near the spot where he commenced his ascent. He found the task a pretty hard one.

"Perhaps we shall find it more easy on the other side," I observed to Croil.

We both moved on, looking out for a part which we could both more readily climb up. We were not disappointed; it seemed so easy, indeed, that, slinging our rifles over our backs, we made our way up, expecting to meet Ewen at the top. We had nearly reached it, when we heard him shout out—

“Hugh, Croil, take care. I see a large bear coming along; he’ll be up to us presently.”

We looked in the direction Ewen pointed, and there, sure enough, we saw a large shaggy monster coming along leisurely, and sniffing the air as if he had scented us. Croil and I waited until Ewen joined us.

“We must shoot him, or perhaps he’ll manage to make a dinner off one of us,” I exclaimed.

“Dear me, and I left my rifle at the bottom of the hummock,” cried Ewen.

“Then stay where you are, and Croil and I will see what we can do,” I answered. “Should I miss, Croil, do you take a steady aim, while I retreat and reload.”

This was agreed on, and we descended the hummock to a spot whence we thought we could take a better aim at the bear. Just as we reached it, what was our surprise to see Master Bruin seize Ewen’s rifle and begin to walk off with it, looking round cunningly as he did so, as if perfectly aware that he was carrying off the means we possessed of injuring him.

“Fire! fire!” cried Ewen, “or I shall lose my gun.”

Ewen’s voice made the bear stop, and I advanced as

fast as I could, being partially concealed by a projection of the hummock. Taking a steady aim, I pulled the trigger. My bullet struck the bear on the shoulder. He instantly dropped the rifle, and, turning round with a fierce growl, bit at the wound, but did not attempt to run off. This enabled me to reload. Fortunate it was that I had time to do so, for Croil, not being a good shot, missed; when the bear, growling horribly, and showing his teeth, began to move towards us; then, sitting up on his hind paws, he looked about him to make us out more clearly. I told Croil to reload and to stand by me with his rifle, that I might use it should my next shot not take effect. I prayed that my aim might be steady, and fired. Croil and Ewen raised a shout of joy as they saw the bear roll over, kicking his legs in the air. We let him kick, while I again got my rifle ready for action. We then advanced, intending to put the bear out of its misery, while Ewen, slipping down from the top of the ice-hill, ran to possess himself of his gun. The bear's struggles, however, soon ceased, and we had not to expend any further powder and shot upon him.

"How are we to get him to the ship?" exclaimed Croil.

"Where is the ship, rather?" I asked.

"I saw her clearly enough from the top of the hummock," said Ewen. "I was going to cry out when I saw the bear. We may drag the carcase part of the way, and then get some of the men to come and cut it up, and transport the remainder on their shoulders," said Ewen.

This plan was agreed to; by going round the hum-



BRUIN'S SHORT-LIVED TRIUMPH.

mock we could see the ship, though she appeared a long way off. We hoped, however, by returning with so valuable a prize, we should be excused for having gone further than we ought to have done. We found that it was no easy matter to drag along the huge carcase over the ice, even where the surface of the floe was perfectly smooth. At last we had to give up the task, but how we were to find our way back to where we had left the bear was the difficulty, as the fur could not be distinguished at any great distance. At last Croil produced a red handkerchief from his pocket, which we secured to the end of a pole we had carried for the purpose of trying the ice. He then stuck it through the bear's body, with the iron head fixed in the ice. Though the bear could not be seen, the handkerchief could be distinguished at a long distance off. We were pretty well tired when we got back to the ship, and the captain was beginning to find fault with us for having gone so far, when we told him of the bear, and he immediately sent four hands, under the command of Sandy, to bring it in, or at all events the skin, and as much of his flesh as they could carry. We three offered to set off with them, but I was secretly not sorry when the captain remarked that we had taken enough exercise for one day, and ordered us to go below and get some rest.

It was getting dark when Sandy's party returned with our prize, cut up, however, into bits. They were received with a cordial welcome, as all hands were glad to get some fresh meat, which we had not tasted for many a long day.

## CHAPTER VI.



PRETTY well tired with the day's exertions, I turned into my berth. Silence reigned round the ship: not a sea-bird's cry, not the slightest sound from the ice reached us. I dreamed that I was once more at home, climbing over the heathery hills of my native land, when I felt the ship heaving and rolling, her stout timbers creaking and groaning, as blow after blow was dealt on her sides and bows, while noises resembling shrieks and howls came from every direction, filling the air.

Slipping into my clothes I rushed on deck, where everyone else had gone. Dawn had broken. A furious gale was blowing, and the ice, as far as the eye could reach, was in violent commotion, while long lanes or broad pools were opening out to the westward and southward. The captain ordered as much sail as the ship could carry to be set.

"We may yet get free, lads!" he cried.

The announcement was received by shouts from the crew. They were willing to encounter the onslaught of the floes, so that we could force our way out through their midst into open water. The captain or Mr.



Patterson were constantly aloft looking out for leads, but I observed that in spite of their anxiety to find these openings to the southward, the ship's head was generally pointed to the west. At any moment, however, we might find a channel open to the southward. We had long lost sight of the coast of Spitzbergen, and were approaching that of Greenland. Sometimes the lines led us even more to the northward, towards some wide pool, from which no other channel was seen by which we might escape to the open ocean. The course of the ship reminded me of that of a hare, turning now to one side, now to the other, in her attempt to escape from the dogs. Frequently we rushed against the ice with a force which made every timber quiver. But the stout bows were prepared for the shock, and the ice bounded off and the way was clear.

Several days we continued to sail on, sometimes gliding smoothly through the narrow lanes, at others rushing like a battering ram against the floes which impeded our progress. Still, at the end of the time, we appeared to be no nearer the moment of our escape than at first. Masses of ice lay to the southward which closed up directly we began to entertain hopes of reaching them, forming an impenetrable barrier across the course we had to steer.

Again the wind fell. For another day we struggled manfully, sawing and blasting the ice to reach a pool beyond which clear leads were seen. The night came down on us while we were secured to a floe. The next morning the ice had closed round our ship, and we were once more in its vice-like grasp.

Observations were taken, and it was found that, in-

stead of being nearer the south after all our exertions, we, with the whole mass of ice in which we were locked up, were drifting to the northward. All hopes of escaping were abandoned. The broken and rugged state of the ice prevented the possibility of our traversing it with sleighs or dragging boats over it, either to the southward or to the coast of Greenland. Between us and the far-distant shore we should probably find an open space of water which, without the boats, it would be impossible to cross.

We had now to make up our minds to spend the winter in the ice, and wait for the summer to get free, should the ship in the meantime escape being crushed, a fate we knew full well might at any moment overtake her. We were fast to a level floe of great thickness, almost smooth enough in some places for skating, had we possessed skates to amuse ourselves. The inevitable being known, our spirits rose; we formed plans for passing our time and preparing the ship to enable us to endure the cold of an Arctic winter; we even joked on our condition. Ewen suggested that if we were to drift at the rate we were now going we might become discoverers of the North Pole.

So solid was the ice everywhere around it appeared to us that no further damage could happen to the ship, and that all we had to do was to wait patiently until she was liberated during the next summer.

Cold as were the nights, the sun during the day made the air pleasant when the weather was calm, if not almost too hot for exercise in our Arctic clothing. As before, excursions were undertaken in search of walruses and seals, with a slight hope of meeting

with a whale, which might come up to breathe in a pool.

Sandy, Ewen, and I, with two other men, started from the ship; Ewen and I carrying our guns, Sandy his trusty harpoon and line, the men additional harpoons and spears, with a small sledge for dragging back any large game we might kill. It was of the greatest importance to obtain fresh meat to keep away that dreadful complaint, scurvy.

We had crossed our floe, as we called the mass to which we were attached, and were making our way westward in the direction of the land, hoping that from the top of some hummock we might chance to see it. Should the worst come to the worst, we must contrive to get there, and look out for some of the people, who we had heard say are good natured enough, though rather too fond of blubber to make them pleasant messmates in a small hut.

Ewen and I had dropped some way behind our companions, when we saw them turn to the northward towards an ice-hole, which we had shortly before discovered from the top of a hummock. We were about to follow, when Ewen declared that he saw a bear in an opposite direction stealing along amid the broken ice.

We hurried on in the direction he had seen the animal, hoping soon again to catch sight of it. An extensive hummock was before us: I agreed to go round one side, while he took the other. I had parted from him scarcely five minutes when I heard him utter a loud cry for help. I hurried back, expecting to find that he had been attacked by the bear.

What was my dismay then to see neither him nor the bear, but I distinguished a black spot just above the ice near where I had left him. I rushed on, when I



saw Ewen's head projecting out of a water-hole while his hands were holding on to the ice.

"Help me, help me, or I must let go," he shouted.

Fortunately I had brought a coil of light rope, which I carried over my shoulder. Undoing it, I

drew as near to the hole as I could venture. To tell him to catch hold of the end would have been mockery; in attempting to do so he might have sunk. I therefore made a bow-line knot, which I jerked over his shoulders, he then first let go one hand, then the other, and while he clung tightly to it, with considerable exertion, I managed to draw him up out of the water. His rifle, when he fell, he had thrown from him, so that except for the discomfort of being wet and the ill effects which might arise, he was not the worse for the accident. Unwilling to lose the bear, we continued our pursuit after it. If it had been in the neighbourhood it had taken itself off, and we could nowhere discover it.

We accordingly pushed on in the direction Sandy had taken, keeping at the same time a look out for the bear, examining the nature of the ice as we went along, to avoid another tumble through it. There had been a slight fall of snow which enabled us to follow in his track, which we fortunately discovered when at length reaching a hummock, we climbed to the top to look out and ascertain how far he had got from us.

"I see a black spot on the ice. It must be a man. Can anything have happened to the others?" exclaimed Ewen. "He is coming this way."

We descended and ran on to meet him. It was one of the men who had been sent back, he said, to look for us, as the boatswain had become anxious at our non-appearance. When he saw Ewen's condition, he advised that we should go back to the ship, as it might be dangerous for him to remain in his wet

clothes. Ewen, however, insisted on going forward, declaring that as long as he was in exercise he did not feel the cold.

On crossing another hummock, we caught sight of Sandy with his companions. They were bending over a hole in the ice, Sandy with his harpoon prepared to strike at some object in the water. One of the men made a signal to us to keep back. We guessed at once that Sandy expected to find either a seal or a walrus rise to the surface, and was eagerly waiting to harpoon it. We accordingly halted to see what would happen. Presently Sandy stood up, holding his weapon ready to strike; then down it came, and he and his companions seized the end of the line and held fast. We rushed forward to their assistance, and arrived just in time to prevent their being drawn into the water-hole or having to let go the line. "Hold on, lads, hold on!" cried Sandy. "It's a big bull walrus I suspect from the way the fellow tugs." Taking a spear he advanced to the edge of the hole, when he plunged it into the body of an object invisible to us; he then sprang back, and in another instant a huge head and shoulders, with an enormous pair of tusks and flappers, appeared above the surface.

"Haul away, lads, haul away," he shouted, putting his hand to the rope to give us his assistance, when out came, with a loud flop, a large walrus. The creature on seeing us endeavoured to work its way on, opening wide its jaws and threatening us with its tusks; but as it advanced we ran back, until Sandy, taking the third spear, sprang towards its side, into

which he deeply buried the weapon, almost pinning the animal to the ice. It still struggled violently, and as we had no more spears I advanced towards it with my rifle, and shot it through the head, when it rolled over perfectly dead. It was a prize worth having. The difficulty would be to get it back to the ship. We rolled the body on the sleigh, to which we secured it.

We got on very well over the smooth ice, but when we arrived at a hummock we had to exert all our strength to get the carcase up to the top. We then let it roll down again to the opposite side. As we had a good many hummocks to pass, our progress was slow, and the day was waning when we caught sight of the ship. Sandy asked Ewen and me to go forward and obtain assistance. This we very gladly did, for all the party were pretty well worn out, and we felt that we could haul no longer.

I was also particularly anxious to get Ewen into his bed, as his underclothing was still wet. On our arrival the doctor took charge of him; and I volunteered to lead back four of the men, whom the Captain had directed to go and assist Sandy. There was no time to be lost. The sky had become overcast, and there was every appearance that we should have a heavy snow storm. We little knew, however, what was coming. Tired as I was, I set off with the men to try to find Sandy. I felt pretty sure that I could steer a course to the spot where I had left him, from having taken the exact bearings of the ship. Though we had seen the ship in the distance, it was not so easy to distinguish three men surrounded by hum-



CLOSE QUARTERS.





mocky ice. In a short time after we had set out, the expected snow began to fall, and very heavily it came down. I was afraid that, although we might find Sandy, we should be unable to drag back the body of the walrus. This would be provoking after the exertions we had already made. I was truly thankful when we at length caught sight of our shipmates amid the falling snow. They gave a cheer as we approached. The ship was no longer to be seen, and they, not without reason, feared that they might have missed her; and they were indeed, when we found them, steering a course which would have carried them some way to the westward of her. It was a lesson to us in future not to go far from home, unless in the finest weather, without a compass. All hands immediately tackled on to the sledge, and we set off as fast as we could move. I went ahead trying to make out the ship, but the thickening gloom and the fast falling snow concealed her from sight. At last I thought of firing off my rifle. No reply came. I fired again and again.

At length I heard the report of a musket followed by the boom of a big gun. Both appeared much farther off than I expected, though I thought I could judge the direction from which they came. I waited until my companions approached and then led them on. I fired again and was replied to from the ship.

I was thankful when we got alongside and our prize was hoisted on deck. Coarse as was the meat it was eaten with as much gusto as if it had been some delicate luxury.

While we were in the act of stowing away the

blubber, the ship began to move and the ice round us to heave. Every instant the motion increased, and the scene I have before described was enacted but in a more fearful degree. The ship groaned and strained, and the masts quivered as if about to fall. The masses of ice on the outer floe began to break up, and in a few seconds rushed over the more level parts, some remaining with their edges towards the sky, others falling with tremendous crashes and shivering into pieces. We could see some through the gloom rising high above our decks, and we knew at any moment that they might come toppling down upon us and crush the stout ship. Our sense of hearing, indeed, told us more clearly than our eyes what was taking place. The captain, in a calm voice, ordered the crew to make preparations for quitting the ship. The boats were swung out on the davits, so that they could be lowered in a moment, with sails, provisions, and tools ready to put into them, while the men brought up their bags and blankets, and put on their warm clothing. The doctor got his medicine chest ready; the armourer opened the magazine and divided the arms and ammunition. Sacks for sleeping in were added to the articles, and all stood waiting for the order we expected every moment to receive to quit the ship. We stamped about the decks in vain attempting to keep ourselves warm, for no fires had been lighted, lest the stoves being overturned might set the ship in flames.

All night long the fearful uproar continued, the ice pressing with greater and greater force against the sides of the ship. The carpenter was ordered to

sound the well. He reported that the water was rushing in through unseen leaks.

Should the ship sink our fate would be sealed. Our hope was that she might be pressed up on the ice, and that the wreck might preserve us during the winter. At daylight the pressure ceased, but our hope of saving the ship was gone. On examination it was found that many of her stout ribs were broken and her planks forced in, while she herself was lifted several feet above the level of the ice. This made it probable that instead of sinking, should a further pressure ensue, she would be forced up altogether out of the water. We spent the rest of that anxious day in making further preparations for quitting the ship. Yet another night we remained on board, when in the middle watch we were aroused by the boatswain's voice, summoning the men to leave the ship. The fearful commotion of the ice showed that there was no time to lose. The boats were lowered and dragged off towards the centre of the floe. Every man knew what he had to do and worked steadily, and the articles which had been prepared were placed near the boats. The crew worked like a party of ants toiling backwards and forwards, struggling on with loads on their backs, which under ordinary circumstances they could scarcely have attempted to carry. Our fear was that the masts might fall before our task was accomplished. Mercifully, time was given us. Nothing of absolute necessity remained, and we were engaged in setting up a couple of tents which might afford us shelter until we could erect ice houses.

As day broke we saw the masts of our ship swaying

to and fro, while the huge hull, as if by some mighty force below, was lifted up, and then down they came, the foremast first, dragging the mainmast and mizen mast, and the vessel lay a forlorn wreck on the top of the ice.

"It is far better to have her so, than at the bottom of the sea, lads," exclaimed Sandy, "so don't let us despair; though she'll not carry us home, she'll give us stuff to build a house, and enough firewood to last us through the winter. We're a precious deal better off than many poor fellows have been."

Not allowing the men a moment to think of their misfortunes, the captain at once set them the task of building a house, partly from the planking of the ship, and partly with ice. It consisted of an inner chamber with two outer ones, and a long passage leading to it, and several doors, so that the outer could be closed before the inner were opened. We had a sky-light, made from a piece of double glass on the top, and a chimney to afford ventilation and to allow the smoke to escape. While the men were engaged in forming it, the captain, my brother, Ewen and I set off to reach the summit of a berg with our sextants and spy-glasses, hoping that from thence, while we took observations we might catch sight of the Greenland coast. We carried with us also a small flag and staff, which we might plant on the top should our expedition prove successful.

The labour of walking over the hummocky ice was great, for though at a distance it looked tolerably level, we had constantly to be climbing up and sliding down elevations of considerable height. As the days

were getting short, we had little time to spare. We had to keep a look-out also for holes which exist often in thick ice, kept open by whales and other monsters of the deep which come up to breathe.

"I hope that we may fall in with bears," said Ewen; "the chances are, some old fellow will scent us out."

"I shall be very glad to see them," answered the captain. "It would prove that the moveable floes are already connected with the land ice, as bears very seldom swim across a broad channel; but I fear that this immense field on which we stand is still drifting northward, and that none will venture off to us."

At last we got to the foot of the berg for which we were aiming, and commenced its ascent.

"Why it's a mountain and not an iceberg!" cried Ewen. "I see rocks projecting out of it."

The captain laughed.

"Those are mere stones sticking to it," observed Andrew; "they were torn off when the berg was separated from the glacier of which it once formed a part. Vast rocks, far larger than those we see, were at one period of our globe's history, carried over the surface to great distances, and deposited in spots where they are now found, while the marks produced by the bergs are still visible in many localities. If this berg were to be stranded on some distant shore, it would gradually melt leaving the rocks it carries behind it, which a geologist would perceive had no connection with any strata in the neighbourhood, and he would, therefore, at once justly conclude that the rocks had been brought to the spot by a berg."

These remarks were made as we stopped to rest on our way up. We quickly, however, continued the ascent. Andrew, who carried the flag, was first to



reach the top, and, waving it above his head, shouted "Land, land!" then, working away with an axe, he dug a hole in which he planted the staff.

We all soon joined him, when, descending a short distance, the captain surveyed the distant coast, now turning his glass horizontally, now up at the sky. I asked him what he was looking at.

“Curious as it may seem, I can see the shape of the mountains in the sky better than by directing my glass at them; besides which I observe a dark line which indicates a broad channel running between us and the land ice. It shows that I am right in my conjectures, and that the field is still moving northward. It must come to a stop one day, and when it does we must be prepared for even more violent commotions than we have yet experienced.”

The captain calculated that the land we saw was nearly thirty miles off, and that the channel ran about midway between us and it.

It was a question whether we should attempt this long journey during the autumn, or wait for the return of spring, spending our winter in our houses on the ice. The point could only be decided when the field ceased to move. One thing was certain, it would be impossible to get the boats over the hummocky ice, and thus we must depend upon our feet to reach the shore, while we dragged our stores after us.

“We must wait no longer here, lads,” said the captain who had just finished his observation. “If we do we shall be benighted, and may have to spend a long night without shelter.”

We hurried down the berg and directed our course towards the ship, but whether or not we should reach her appeared doubtful.



## CHAPTER VII.



It was evening when we got back to the encampment. On casting our eyes towards the ship, her appearance, as she lay over-lapped with masses of ice on her beam ends, could not fail to produce a melancholy feeling.

“She’ll never float again!” exclaimed the captain with a sigh. “We must make the best of things, however, as they are.”

The men had progressed with the house. It was already habitable, though much more was to be done to enable us to bear the piercing cold of an arctic winter.

Next day was employed in getting everything out of the ship, which could be reached, likely to be useful, as she could no longer afford us a safe shelter. We began to cut away the bulwarks, the upper planks, and indeed all the wood we could get at, to serve for fuel as well as to strengthen the house. While thus employed, the fearful sounds from which we had for some time been free, again assailed our ears. There was a sudden movement of our floe, while all around us, and especially to the northward, we could see the ice

heaving and tumbling, huge masses falling over, and floes rising one above another. Should our floe be subject to the same violent pressure, a slab might slide over it and sweep us to destruction. Even should some of the more active manage to climb to the top, our house and boats and stores must inevitably be lost, and those who might have escaped at first would, ere long, be frozen to death.

The hours we thus passed, not knowing at what moment the catastrophe might occur, were terrible in the extreme. To work was impossible. At length, however, the disturbance ceased. The intense cold quickly congealed the broken masses together, and we were able to turn in and sleep soundly.

The next day all was quiet. The captain was of opinion that we should move no further north, and that, should our floe become detached, we might expect to drift to the southward.

The captain's observations showed that at present we were stationary, but it was still doubtful whether our floe was or was not united to the main body. The captain, Mr. Patterson, my brother, the boatswain and I, had been discussing the subject one evening as we sat in the hut, and were afterwards talking of the Aurora Borealis when I agreed to go out and ascertain if any of peculiar brilliancy was visible.

On emerging from the hut, I gazed up at the sky. An Aurora was blazing brilliantly, forming an irregular arch, from which showers of rays of many colours spread in every direction. I was watching it with intense admiration, and was intending to go back and call my companions, when one of the dogs which

had followed me gave a loud bark. It was answered by a growl. Looking over the ice I saw two enormous shaggy monsters, who, sniffing the air, advanced cautiously towards me. The brave dog dashed forward. In vain I called him to return.

Satisfied that our visitors were Polar bears which must have come from the main land, I hurried back, closing the door behind me to prevent them from entering. The captain, mate, and my brother seized their rifles, as I did mine, hoping to kill one or both of the intruders. As we opened the door, a loud cry uttered by a dog reached our ears. One of the bears had seized the animal and was carrying him off, satisfied with his prize. The other was creeping on towards the hut. Our bullets quickly settled him, and he rolled over. We then gave chase to the other who was carrying off the dog, but we were compelled to stop and reload, and by the time we had done this, so rapidly did the animal run that he was far beyond our reach, and all hope of rescuing our canine companion was over. We regretted the loss of the brave dog. It was a lesson to us not to let the others loose until we were ready to assist in attacking any similar visitors. The bear was quickly skinned and cut up. The skin would serve us for clothing, the fat for fuel, the meat for food. This visit of the bears showed us that the field of which our floe formed part must be attached to the land-ice. Our captain being anxious to visit the shore, intending, should a favourable spot be found, to form our winter quarters on it—we agreed to set out the next morning.

Much to our disappointment, when the time came,

the captain was unable to go. He was very unwell, and my brother forbade him to take the journey. As he did not improve, Andrew was unable to leave him,



and it was finally settled that the mate, Sandy, Ewen, Croil, another man, and I should form the party to proceed to the land. We had a small sledge which had been manufactured some time before. To this we attached our remaining dogs, and loaded it with stores

of ammunition and provisions, including food for the dogs. Each of us carried also a small load as well as our rifles and long poles to assist our progress. Our companions cheered us as we set off, several accompanying us part of the way from the camp. We were by this time pretty well accustomed to travelling over the ice, but we had great difficulty in making our dogs, who had not been well trained, pull together, and the mate, losing patience, declared that he would rather drag the sledge himself, and that he wished the dogs back again.

"If he were to try it for half an hour he would change his tone," observed Sandy to me; "the doggies will get along well enough in a few days."

"In a few days!" I exclaimed, "I thought that we should get to the shore by night-fall."

"Many a night will fall before we reach it," answered Sandy. "If we could go in a straight line over smooth ice, at a jog trot, the case would be different. We shall have to make our way in and out among the bergs and hummocks, and maybe to take a long circumfendibus to avoid any waterholes in our course; we are very likely to fall in with some, solid as the ice appears hereabouts."

I soon found that Sandy was perfectly correct in his prognostications. For the early part of the first day we got on well enough. We had our choice of climbing over numerous ridges from ten to twenty feet in height, or going round until we could find a passage between them. We had thus made less than three miles when the night closed in on us. We then put up our tent, lighted our lamp, and crept into our sleeping sacks.

Though our quarters were rather close, we were more comfortable than I could have supposed possible. We had a long night, and with the first streaks of dawn, having breakfasted inside our tent on coffee boiled over the lamp, we again proceeded. Our dogs, I should have said, slept outside, and they formed a sufficient guard to give us notice should any bears approach.

The next day we made even less progress than on the first, though we met with no accident to hinder us. Sometimes we dragged the sledge over the hummocks, and sometimes we went round them, the dogs preferring the former method, as while we toiled they sat up on their tails watching our proceedings with infinite satisfaction.

The next night I was awakened by hearing a rustling sound, which I guessed was snow falling, but I soon dropped asleep again forgetting all about it. In the morning I saw that the sides of the tent were considerably pressed in, and on drawing aside the curtain which closed the front, a mass of snow fell inside. Looking out, what was our dismay to find that we were entirely surrounded. Travelling which was before difficult would now be doubly so. However, on further examination we found that, having chosen a sheltered spot under a hummock, the snow had drifted round us.

We easily, therefore, forced our way out, roused up the half-buried dogs, whose noses showed their whereabouts, and having taken our morning meal doubled up our tent and then trudged forward, Sandy leading. We followed in line, thus making a path for the dogs

who without difficulty kept up with us. Before long we came to a berg from which extended north and south a line of hummocks. It seemed to bar further progress. To ascertain which course to pursue, we agreed to climb to the top of the berg, leaving Ewen and Croil to take charge of the sledge. The mate, Sandy, and I, at once commenced the ascent. It was no easy work, and we ran great risk of slipping down again and breaking our limbs. Still, by persevering, the top at length was gained. We could see the land very clearly to the westward, and between it and us the ice appeared far more level than any we had hitherto passed over. To the north it was utterly impracticable. To the southward we discovered a passage which we hoped to reach in the course of the day. The mate's belief was that we were close upon the land-ice, and that by pushing on we could reach it by nightfall.

Having made these observations we prepared to descend, but we found that the chance of falling when doing so would be far greater than when ascending. It appeared, however, from where we stood, that there was a slope on the southern side where we might get down with comparative ease. There was, however, a projecting ledge which must be knocked away before we could reach the slope. We had brought ropes with us, and Sandy passing one round his waist, begged the mate and me to hold it at the other end while he advanced with his staff, at the point of which he had secured a huge lump of ice. Using this as a sledge hammer, he began knocking away at the ledge, and after a few blows the

whole mass giving way went thundering down the slope.

"It's just as well to clear that off," he observed, "or it might have come down on our heads."

This was the more likely when he told us that he had observed a deep crack, which had induced him to make the attempt to knock the ledge away.

We now descended and rejoined Ewen and his companions, who had been greatly alarmed at seeing the mass of ice come rattling down, supposing that some accident had happened to us, while they had with difficulty restrained the dogs from galloping away from them.

We now directed our course southward, and were not disappointed in finding a passage through the hummocks, which enabled us to get on the smoother land-ice. We had, however, soon to camp. To render our tent warm, having cleared away the snow, we built a wall round it which sheltered us from the wind.

On the evening of the second day after this, we reached the shore, which rose bleak and barren before us. Yet it was a satisfaction to set our feet on firm ground. We landed in a small bay, the shore for a short distance shelving up to the foot of the cliffs, which—as they extended round to the east—would, we agreed, afford us shelter from the more bitter blasts of winter. The rocks were bare and rugged. Here and there a few lichens appeared, which to our eyes, long unaccustomed to anything of a green tint, seemed very pleasant.

"This will do!" cried the mate, "if our shipmates



can reach this, we may pass the winter far better than we should have done on the open floe."

As we had but a few more minutes of daylight, we hurriedly pitched our tent on a level spot close under the rocks, piling up the snow around it as before.

The mate was anxious to return at once with the news of our success, and to guide the party to the shore. He hoped, with a good night's rest, to be able to set off early in the morning, and to perform a great part of the distance before night-fall.

Sandy suggested, that it would be as well if some of us remained, as it would be necessary to carry but few articles on the sledge, and the dogs would the more easily perform the journey. He offered to go with Ewen and Croil, but to this the mate would not agree, and announced his intention to set off with Croil, leaving the rest of us to build a snow hut for the reception of the party.

We had brought, I should have said, a couple of lamps with sufficient oil. We were therefore provided with one of the chief necessities of life. We hoped also to shoot a bear, or perhaps some birds, to increase our stock of provisions.

When morning returned, however, a storm was blowing outside the bay, though within we were tolerably sheltered from its fury. To have attempted to cross the ice while it continued would have been madness.

The mate and Sandy therefore assisted us in putting up a hut. We had abundance of snow from a drift collected on the opposite side of the bay, though we soon exhausted that which lay immediately round us.

The storm, however, increased to such an extent that we were compelled to take shelter within our tent, which, had it not been surrounded by a snow wall, would inevitably have been blown down. As we sat crowded together in our tent, waiting for the cessation of the storm, the howling and roaring of the wind among the rocks in no way served to raise our spirits, but rather increased the gloomy forebodings of evil which stole over us.

The mate announced his intention of taking a look round, to see what prospect there was of the weather clearing.

"Stay here, lads," he said, taking up his gun, "there's no reason why you should be exposed to the cold. I'm more accustomed to it than you are."

"Not more than me, sir," said Sandy; "I'll go with you, if you like."

"No, no, boatswain. You stay and look after the others. You are older than I am, at all events, and require more rest."

Saying this the mate went out and closed the door of the tent.

Ewen, Croil, and the seaman were asleep. Sandy and I talked on for some time.

"Wonder the mate doesn't come back," said the boatswain. "I'm afraid something has happened to him. He can't have lost his way on the ice, but he may have slipped over a rock, or into a seal hole, if any are to be found close in shore."

We waited a little longer, and at length Sandy, starting up, exclaimed, "We must go and look for him."

Just then our ears were saluted by a loud roar, which made the rest of the party jump up. We all hastened out. No one was to be seen.

"Where did the sound come from?" asked Sandy. "I thought it was quite near."

"From the other side of the rock," I answered.

We hastened towards the spot, in the direction to which I pointed. We all had our guns in our hands ready for an encounter with a bear, which we expected to see. What was my horror on getting round the rock to discover the mate on the ground, a huge shaggy monster standing over him. We crept on, afraid, should we shout, that the bear might carry off his victim. Whether the mate was dead or alive, we could not tell, but he lay perfectly still. Sandy was leading, but he was not a first-rate shot, and I would rather have trusted to my own rifle. At last the bear made a movement, and Sandy, thinking he was going to bite the mate, fired, but he only wounded the animal in the back. What was my horror to see it seize the mate by the body and scamper off with him. We all fired, but dared not aim at the animal's head, believing that the mate was still alive, for fear of killing him. I stopped to reload, as did Ewen.

"After him, lads," shouted Sandy, but the bear was far too fleet for us to overtake, and to our grief and dismay disappeared with his victim behind the rocks to the northward.

We searched in vain for our companion. Though we traced the way the bear had gone by the crimson stains on the white snow, it convinced us that the poor mate was killed. To follow further would have



DEATH OF THE MATE,

been useless. With sad hearts we returned to our tent, almost frozen by the cold blast, to spend the most melancholy night we had yet passed.

We had now to settle on our future proceedings. Sandy had become the leader of the party. He proposed returning to the ship, but none of us wished to be left behind, and preferred rather to undergo the toils and risks of the journey than to remain on shore. But of this Sandy would not hear. He declared that he could go very well with only one of us, and that the other three by remaining—I acting as officer—could manage well enough by ourselves.

At last I gave in, and Sandy with the seaman set off as soon as the wind had abated. We watched them as they made their way over the plain of ice, their forms diminishing into mere dots, then finally disappearing. We in the meantime were working away to complete our hut and to render it as habitable as possible. The flesh of the bear we had killed afforded us an ample supply of food, while the fat served to increase our stock of fuel. There was probably drift-wood on the shore, but except a few pieces which stuck up above the snow, we could obtain none. We took care of every scrap we could find, not to burn, but to manufacture into such articles as we might require. In the crevices of the rocks we discovered some low creeping plants which in any other region would have been bushes, but were here a mere collection of twigs, no thicker than our little fingers, just appearing above the ground. We agreed that each should take certain duties, and it was settled that Croil should stay at home and

look after the hut, employing himself in either cooking or scraping the bear's skin to make it fit for use as a covering. Should we kill a sufficient number of bears, we intended to fasten the skins of some of them together so as to form a roof to our hut, while others would make great-coats or bed coverings.

Soon after Sandy and his companion had departed, Ewen and I took our guns both for the sake of exercise and to try and shoot bears, reindeers, or musk oxen which we thought it possible might be found in that region. We were not aware that the latter animals had migrated southward by that time, or indeed that they were likely to be found only on level ground where the depth of the snow was not sufficient to prevent them from getting at the moss or lichens beneath. I was thankful to have Ewen as my companion. He had greatly improved since he came on board and showed that he possessed qualities which I did not before suspect, so that I felt for him as I should for a brother. The atmosphere had become calm and comparatively warm though the snow remained hard and crisp.

Ewen and I kept under the cliffs and were tempted to make our way much further south than we had hitherto gone, in the hopes of discovering some opening into the interior of the country. We at last reached a part of the cliffs where, though very rugged, they were less precipitous than in other parts. The sun was sinking behind them, but we still had abundance of daylight for exploring. Ewen offered to climb to the top in the hopes of obtaining an extensive view and perhaps of finding level ground

where we should have the chance of finding deer or oxen. There was no reason why we should both run the risk, for a risk there was, though a slight one.

"Let me make the attempt alone, while you remain below, and point out to me the best path to take," he said.

I did not much like to do this, but he declared that if I insisted on going he would give up the expedition. As I saw the sense of his proposal, I consented, and he commenced climbing up, rifle in hand. He had gone some distance when I saw a creature creeping along the rocks above his head, and directly afterwards, as it came more into sight, I saw that it was a huge bear. I shouted to him, to draw his attention to it, should he not have discovered the animal. He stopped and began to descend to a position from whence he could take a steady aim at the monster, should it come within his reach. What was my horror directly afterwards to see two other bears crawling out from among the rocks by which they had hitherto been concealed, evidently having discovered him. It seemed impossible that he should escape. I shouted to him, when he again began clambering up the rock. To my dismay, as he did so the first bear crawled down and seated itself on a point so as to intercept him.

The two other creatures got closer and closer with the evident intention of seizing him. I trembled for his safety, and hurried to the nearest spot from which I could take a steady aim.

"Never mind the fellow above you," I shouted. "If you will shoot the one nearest to you, I will



**A CRITICAL POSITION.**



manage the other, and we will then tackle the third if he attempts to come down."

I could well enter into Ewen's feelings. It was surprising, in the perilous position in which he was placed, that he should have retained any presence of mind.

Following my advice, he sat himself down on the rock and took aim, waiting until I should fire.

"Now!" I cried, and we both pulled our triggers at the same moment.

I own that I trembled lest either one or both of us might miss, in which case it seemed impossible that he should escape destruction. As the smoke cleared away from before my eyes, I saw the bears in motion, but instead of advancing they both fell back and came tumbling down the cliff close to where I was standing. I rapidly loaded, as did Ewen. We had still another antagonist to contend with, whom he must tackle alone, for I could not help him.

Just as I expected to see the bear crawling down the rocks to seize my friend, to my infinite satisfaction, the creature, alarmed by the reports, turned tail and began clambering up the cliff.

I shouted to Ewen not to shoot, as, should he only wound the bear, it might in its rage turn and attack him. I also had to look after one of the others, who though wounded, was not dead, and recovering from its fall, was looking about apparently for the foe who had injured it. On espying me it began to advance, growling furiously. As blood was flowing from behind its shoulder, I hoped that it might soon drop, but in the meantime it might tear me to pieces, and

perhaps treat Ewen in the same way. To run from a bear is at all times very dangerous, unless to gain protection of some sort at no great distance; for the bear—clumsy as it looks—can run much faster than a man. I, therefore, having reloaded my rifle, stood with it ready to send a shot through the animal's head. I waited until the wounded bear was almost close upon me, and I could not refrain from uttering a shout of satisfaction as it rolled over perfectly dead. Ewen in the meantime, approaching the other, had finished it by firing a bullet through its head.

"I wish that we had the sledge to take home the meat and skins," observed Ewen, "but we must carry as much as we can."

Our fear was that, should we leave the meat, other bears, of whom there appeared to be a whole colony in the neighbourhood, would come and devour it. We managed to get off the skins, which were likely to prove most valuable to us; and, loaded with them and a portion of the meat, we returned to the hut, where we found Croil anxiously looking out for us. He too, had seen a couple of bears moving across the bay, and was afraid that we might have been attacked by them, and suffered the fate of the poor mate.



## CHAPTER VIII.



WE now waited in anxious expectation for the arrival of our shipmates, but they did not appear. The days were getting shorter, the nights longer. The cold was increasing. Often and often we gazed out over the ice. As far as we could judge no change had taken place in it. A vast snow-covered plain, with here and there mountainous heights of ice could be seen extending as far as the horizon. Unfortunately we had not brought a telescope, or we thought that we might have discovered our friends. At length we began to entertain the most serious apprehensions as to their fate.

We had one evening turned in, and, having closed the door of the hut, had lighted our lamp and composed ourselves to sleep, when Ewen roused me up.

"I heard a shout!" he exclaimed, "they must be coming."

We slipped into our day clothing, and hurried out, carrying our rifles in our hands, for we never moved without them.

Again there was a shout: we replied to it with all our might. Some one was evidently approaching.

More clearly to show our position, I fired off my rifle, and sent Croil in to light a small piece of drift-wood the only thing we possessed to serve as a torch. Again and again we shouted: at length we caught sight through the gloom of night of some dark spots moving over the snow.

"Hurrah!" cried Ewen, "there are our shipmates!" Soon after he had spoken I discovered three of the dogs dragging the sledge and two men following them. The one was Sandy, the other Hans the seaman.

Hurrying forward we led them up to the hut. Sandy could scarcely speak.

"We are well-nigh starved, and I thought we should never get back," he said at length.

"Where are our shipmates? Why haven't they come?" I asked.

"I'll tell you all about it when we have had some food and rest. Can you give us something to eat?"

"Plenty," I answered, leading him and Hans into the hut, while Ewen and Croil unharnessed the poor dogs, who looked well-nigh famished. Ewen gave them some bears' flesh, and they devoured it with a greediness which showed that they had gone long without a meal.

We soon had some slices of meat frying on our stove and some snow melting. After the two weary travellers had eaten, and drank some hot coffee, Sandy gave us the alarming intelligence that he had been unable to reach the camp. On arriving at the edge of the land-ice, what was his dismay to discover a wide gap between it and the field in the midst of

which our friends were encamped, and which was in motion drifting southward. Still, hoping that it might again come in contact with the land-ice, he determined to move in the same direction. He caught sight indeed of a flag and what he took to be a portion of the wreck, though at so great a distance that he did not suppose the sound of his rifle, which he fired off, would be heard. No object indeed would have been gained had it been so, as it would have been impossible for one party to communicate with the other. For two days he followed the floe, but the distance between it and the land-ice increased. At length the ice over which he was travelling became so rough that he could proceed no further; he lost sight of the floe and its living freight, and was reluctantly compelled to return for want of food. One of the dogs gave in and it was killed and eaten. The last morsels had been consumed the day before he and Hans reached the hut. Their joy at finding us still there may be imagined, for had we by any chance fallen in with natives and accompanied them to the south, they fully expected to perish.

As soon as the meal was over, the two weary travellers lay down to sleep. Croil imitated their example, while Ewen and I sat up by the light of the lamp, I mending clothes and my friend engaged in preparing a small tub for holding bear's grease to serve us for fuel. Our conversation naturally took a melancholy turn. The thought that the floe on which were my brother and his companions might be dashed to pieces, and that they would perish miserably, was painful in the extreme. We thought more of them,



"EWEN AND I SAT UP BY THE LIGHT OF THE LAMP."



indeed, than of ourselves, though our position was truly perilous. Our only shelter during the intense cold of an Arctic winter was an ice hut. Hitherto the bears we had shot had afforded us food and fuel; but they might take their departure, and we should then have no other food on which to depend, until the return of spring should enable us to kill walruses and seals. No ships, even in the summer, were likely to penetrate so far north, for few whalers had got so near the pole as the *Hardy Norseman* had done, and destruction had overtaken her.

"Still I have heard that people have wintered in Nova Zembla and Spitzbergen, even with fewer means of supporting themselves than we possess," observed Ewen. "We must not despair, Hugh, but trust in God; Sandy's return to us is greatly to our advantage; for with his harpoon, when our powder is expended, he will be able to kill seals, and furnish us with food."

"I am thinking of my brother Andrew, and the hopelessness of finding David," I replied.

"But we do not know that he and the rest of the party are lost, and if your brother David is alive he may still make his escape wherever he may be."

At last Ewen and I, having trimmed the lamp that it might keep alight, and maintain sufficient warmth in the hut, carefully closed the door and lay down to sleep.

There was no necessity for keeping a watch as was the case on the floe, nor had we the dread of an attack from hostile natives, for no human beings were likely to come near us. We should have been heartily



ready to welcome any Esquimaux should they find us out.

I awoke at the usual hour, just before day-break, and getting up trimmed the lamp which had almost gone out, and set to work to prepare breakfast for my companions.

After a time I called up Ewen and Croil, but we allowed Sandy and Hans to sleep on, keeping the breakfast ready to give them the moment they should awake. It was noon before they opened their eyes, when having taken the food we offered them they fell asleep again. It was several days, indeed, before they got over the fatigue of their journey.

Sandy, when once himself again, was as anxious as any of us to make preparations for passing the winter. We talked of pushing southward to seek a more level region, but the lofty hills in the distance, without the appearance of any spot on which we could land, made us hesitate. As the days were now only of three hours' duration, we feared that we should not have light for more than a very short journey, and it was impossible to endure the cold for any length of time after the sun had gone down. We had already a good supply of bear's meat, but it was important to get more. Our store we had buried in a pit close to the hut, so that no roving bears could get at it. They are in no way particular, and would quite as readily feast on the flesh of their relatives as on any other meat. We had frequently seen their tracks made during the night close outside the hut, but they must have taken their departure, like spirits of another world, before dawn. They

were not as hungry at this time of the year as they would be further on, when no seals were to be caught and the deer and other animals had migrated southward. At length the sun sank beneath the horizon, not again to rise until the end of a long winter's night. The cold too had become so intense that we could only keep ourselves warm in the hut with the door closed and the lamp alight, but then it was almost too hot. We had, therefore, to make a window through which we could admit fresh air, without the necessity of opening the door; but when there was any wind we were obliged to fill up the aperture with snow, for the smallest orifice admitted a draught of air which pierced the hand like a needle when held up to it. The poor dogs had to be taken inside, for though we had built kennels for them close to the hut, there was a great risk of their being carried off by bears while we were asleep. Those "monarchs of the realms of ice," as they are poetically called, had scented us out, and scarcely an hour passed but one made his appearance. Sometimes they got off, though we killed no inconsiderable number, thus adding to our stock of food, while their skins enabled us to make our beds as warm as we could desire. At length, however, they became more daring and troublesome, so that none of us could go out of the hut alone lest we should be carried off.

We had expended by this time so much of our powder that we had resolved to use no more of it until the return of spring, when we should require it on our journey southward.

How the winter went by I can scarcely describe,

We had no books, but were never idle, being always employed in manufacturing articles with our knives, either from bones or pieces of drift-wood, or making shoes and clothing from the bears' skins.

We were thus employed, having opened the window to admit some fresh air, and a few rays of the returning light of day, when, looking up, what should I see but the snout of a bear poked through the aperture, evidently enjoying the odours arising from some steaks frying on our stone.

Not at all disconcerted by the shouts we raised, for the sake of getting the savoury morsels, he began scraping away at the snow walls, in which, with his powerful claws, he could speedily have made an alarming breach.

Sandy, jumping up with his harpoon, which he had been polishing, in his hand, darted it with all his might at the bear. Fortunately his weapon did not stick in the animal's throat, or he might, I confidently believe, have pulled down the whole structure in his struggles.

Uttering a roar of pain, the bear started back. His roar was repeated by several other bears outside, who must have joined it from sympathy, echoed by the dogs from the inside, who jumped about eager to attack their foes.

Ewen was about to open the door, when Sandy stopped him.

"Let us see how many of these gentlemen there are outside, for I've a notion there are more than we should wish to tackle," he observed.

He and I looked out of the window, when we saw

no less than three huge bears close to the hut, while the fellow we had wounded and several others were visible further off, watching the proceedings of their



friends, whose evident intention it was to break in if they could, to eat the savoury steaks we were cooking, and us into the bargain. Notwithstanding our intention of not using our fire-arms, we must either kill

the bears if we could not drive them off, or run the risk of being torn to pieces by them.

As they seemed resolved to pull our hut down for the sake of getting at us, we loaded our fire-arms and prepared for the defence of our fortress. Sandy desired me to take my post at the window, and to shoot down as many as I could, while he with the rest of the party opened the door and sallied out to attack the invaders. I advised him, however, to wait and see the result of my shots, unless the bears should actually begin to tear down the walls. Taking aim at the nearest, I fired. The thick smoke prevented me for some seconds from seeing the effect of my shot. Great was my satisfaction when I perceived the bear struggling on his back in the snow.

Ewen then handed me up his rifle, and while he reloaded mine, I took aim at the next bear, which I knocked over in the same fashion as I had the first; but strange to say, their companions, instead of being frightened and running away, came growling up as if resolved to revenge their deaths.

On seeing this, Sandy, who was looking over my shoulder, calling the rest of the party, opened the door, and fired a volley, all hands shouting at the same time at the top of their voices.

One of the bears fell; the rest, terrified and pursued by the dogs, who bolted out, took to flight. We called off our canine attendants, who were, however, very unwilling to return, coming slowly back, and every now and then facing round and barking furiously at the retreating bears.

Four of the animals had been killed, and we had



UNPLEASANT SOCIETY.



made, as Sandy observed, "a good morning's work." It took us some time to cut them up and stow the flesh away in our pit, while the preparation of the skins gave us abundant occupation, though not a pleasant one in the confined hut.

Day after day went by; the sun remained longer and longer above the horizon; while the warmth sensibly increased, when there happened to be no wind, although the air was still cold enough to make our thick clothing indispensable.

We now began to make preparations for our journey southward, which must be performed before the land-ice should begin to break up.

I suggested that some of the party should first make a trip with part of our provisions, sufficient for three or four days, to the south, and there form a depot, so that we might not run the risk of starving should we fail to kill any animals, and this was agreed to.

Sandy and I drew lots which of us should go, and which remain at the hut.

The lot fell on him to go, and he chose Hans and Croil to accompany him. I confess that I would far rather have gone, but having agreed to the proposal, I felt bound to yield to his wishes.

The party set off the next morning with the tent, and as much bear's meat as they chose to carry, and a portion of the remainder of our other stores. Ewen and I saw them off, not without some forebodings of evil, and then returned to our hut to employ ourselves as usual.

We never allowed the time to hang heavily on our



hands, though we would have given a great deal for a book of any description, especially for a Bible, for that could have been read over and over again with advantage, whereas any other book would have been quickly got through. We calculated that Sandy would be absent a week or ten days at the utmost. The ten days had elapsed, and Sandy had not appeared ; a fearful snow-storm, with a violent wind, had, however, come on, and confined us to the hut, and we concluded that he and his companions had pitched their tent, and had halted until it should be over, and that we might thus expect to see them at any hour.

Still days went by after this, and they did not come.

“Can they have deserted us ?” asked Ewen.

“I am sure that they have not willingly done so,” I replied. “Some serious accident I fear may have happened to prevent them from returning.”

Our position had now become critical in the extreme. In a short time the ice might leave the shore, and our escape from the bay would be impossible.

We resolved at once to set out. Should the party be returning, we might perhaps meet them. If not, we must push on as long as our strength lasted. Having accordingly packed up our meat, our lamp, our stock of oil, and our ammunition, we set out.

We might find shelter in some cavern in the cliffs, or if not we could build a snow-hut of sufficient size to contain us. We might even venture to sleep out on calm nights, covered up in our blankets.

Before quitting the spot we closed the door of our

hut, to prevent the ingress of bears, for we might possibly have to return to it, though as the warmth of the sun increased it would melt away.

We trudged on manfully, both feeling in better spirits than we had done for some days. On our right rose lofty cliffs, and occasionally vast masses of ice formed into glaciers a mile or more in extent, while on the left stretched out a vast field of ice, out of which rose numerous bergs of fantastic shapes, but no open water could we discover.

For the first day we got on very well. As the light decreased we built a snow-hut in which we could comfortably rest, with an entrance so small that no bear could have suddenly pounced upon us, while we kept our rifles ready to shoot the intruder should one appear. Next night we did the same, though we felt very tired when the work was over, and but little inclined to start the next morning at sunrise. We had, indeed, miscalculated our strength. It seemed easy enough to walk straight ahead over the ice for several hours a day; but we found that, though the ice was sometimes smooth, we had frequently to clamber over hummocks, so that our progress was slower than we had expected. At last Ewen declared that, unless we could take a whole day's rest, he could go no farther.

My fear was lest, while we were inside our hut, Sandy and his companions might pass us. I agreed to take a short journey only, and offered to watch while Ewen slept. This he did not like to let me do, but I overpersuaded him, and, while he turned in, I walked about the outside of the hut, sometimes

climbing to the top of a hummock near at hand in the hopes of seeing our friends. The day closed in, however, without a single object appearing, and the next morning, Ewen saying that he felt stronger after his rest, we continued our journey.

We had been travelling for a couple of hours or more, when we reached a point beyond which a deep bay appeared. Should we go round it, or cross from one side to the other? As far as we could discern, there was nothing to tempt us to go out of our course. The cliffs were more precipitous and lofty than those we had hitherto seen, with intervals of vast glaciers of equal height.

We had hitherto had the cliffs to guide us, but now should the snow fall, or the weather become thick, we should not be able to distinguish them. Clear weather was, therefore, of the utmost importance, so, praying that it might continue, we pushed forward.

Though we travelled all day, with but a few minutes' rest to take our food, the opposite side of the bay appeared no nearer than at first. Darkness came on, and not the faintest outline of the cliffs could we discover. It seemed to us, as we crept into our hut, that we were in the midst of the frozen sea. Fatigue happily brought us sound sleep. When we got up in the morning, what was our dismay to find that a violent storm was blowing, and that the snow was falling so thickly that we had great difficulty in forcing our way out of the hut. In a short time we should have been enclosed in what might have proved our tomb. To travel was next to impossible; although

on starting we knew the direction to take, we were aware that we might very soon go wrong should the wind change. We therefore remained in our hut,



occasionally digging away the snow to keep the passage clear.

At last the snow ceased, and as we could make out the faint outlines of the cliffs to the southward, we at once, shouldering our packs, pushed forward. It

seemed, however, that we had made no progress when again we had to halt and build a hut.

The three next days were but a repetition of those I have described ; but now our provisions had greatly decreased, as had our strength. The cliffs on the other side of the bay had not been reached, and when we got there, what were we likely to find ? We had to confess to each other that we should not have strength to go much farther. Still, we resolved to struggle on as long as life remained. The snow had again begun to fall, but not with sufficient thickness to compel us to stop. At last Ewen suddenly declared that not another step could he stir. I offered to take his rifle and his pack, but, when I made the attempt to carry them, I found that I was unable to bear an additional load to my own.

Poor Ewen sank down. "Go on," he said ; "you may reach human beings, but I fear that you will not." I could not bear the thought of leaving my friend. Even should I reach the shore and find a settlement, he would be dead before I could return. I proposed again encamping, but he had not strength even to assist in building a hut.

While I was endeavouring to encourage him, I fancied that I saw in the distance to the westward some objects moving over the ice. They might be bears—reindeers would scarcely have left the land. I looked more attentively. While I was gazing, the snow almost ceased falling.

"Look, Ewen, look !" I shouted, "those are men and sledges. They must be Sandy's party, but they are too far off to see us. They are coming nearer,



PREPARING TO GO ASHORE.



however. Rouse up, old fellow; let us try to meet them."

Ewen's strength seemed suddenly to return. We hurried forward, but we both feared that they might pass by without discovering us. As we got nearer to them we shouted, but our voices were hollow and low, and too probably would not be heard.

"I'll fire my rifle!" I exclaimed. "I wonder that I did not think of doing so at first."

The report had the desired effect. As we watched the strangers, to our joy we saw that they were directing their course towards us. In a short time we were among a party of Esquimaux, who seemed very much surprised at seeing us, though what they said we could not make out.

From the direction they had been travelling, we concluded that they were bound to some place on the north side of the bay for the purpose of spending the summer there. We tried to make them understand that if they would turn back and carry us to some place where we should find Europeans, we would give them our rifles, and anything else in our power. After holding a consultation, during which they looked frequently at the sky, they agreed to my proposal. Two of the party, unloading one of the smaller sledges, made signs that Ewen should get upon it. They then packed some provisions they had brought, together with some of our loads and rifles, and signified that they were ready to set off.

Having rubbed noses with their friends, who continued their route to the northward, we started in the opposite direction.



## CHAPTER IX.



HAVING no load to carry, I was able to keep up with the Esquimaux and their dog-sledge till it was time to encamp, when Ewen, who had recovered his strength more rapidly than I could have supposed possible, offered to assist me in building a snow-hut. We tried in vain to learn from the Esquimaux whether they had seen Sandy and his party, but they failed to understand our signs as we did theirs. They were merry fellows, though not pleasant companions in a snow-hut in one sense. Notwithstanding this, we spent the night with a feeling of greater security than we had enjoyed for some time.

The following day we were passing close to an iceberg which, from its appearance, I should have supposed could have withstood the fury of the most violent storms. I was admiring its fantastic form, when one of the Esquimaux seized my arm, while the other urged on the dogs at redoubled speed. We had got a hundred yards from it, when without any warning it suddenly capsized, and shivered into fragments, which glided along the ice towards us. In an instant we were surrounded by pieces of ice, pools of

water and fissures, into which it required the greatest care to avoid falling.

We pushed on without stopping to look behind us,



until we were at a considerable distance from the spot. The Esquimaux did not appear to think the occurrence at all unusual; but after this they kept at a respectful distance from other icebergs of similar appearance. It was a sign to us that the sun was

gaining strength, and we could not help fearing that the whole field of ice might before long break up.

At length we approached the shore, the cliffs which had hitherto fringed the coast running back some distance inland before they again appeared to the southward.

The Esquimaux pointed to the land towards which they directed the sledge.

We could, however, see no signs of dwellings, though we discovered some objects moving about, which we supposed were human beings. On approaching we saw a number of dogs in front of a snow-hut which rose just above the ground.

On seeing our canine friends they rushed forward, barking a welcome, though I am not certain how they would have treated us had not our Esquimaux guides driven them off. Directly afterwards a number of men, women, and children came out of their huts in the neighbourhood, and appeared to be enquiring who we were and what had brought us to their settlement.

The replies seemed to be satisfactory, for they began forthwith to rub noses with us and then led us up to their dwellings.

We tried to make them understand that it was our object to proceed further south, where we could meet with our countrymen and other Europeans. The cunning fellows, however, did not, as far as we could make out, wish to go to the southward, but gave us to understand that we were welcome to remain with them as long as we liked.

Our guides having delivered us over to their friends,





immediately set off to rejoin the party we had met proceeding northward. This made us believe that they expected the ice would soon break up, and that the object of their journey was to secure summer quarters, when the rest would rejoin them in their kayacks.

Our new friends at once set to work to build for us an igloo, or hut of ice, each block being about six inches in thickness, and a couple of feet in length, cemented by snow. The domed roof was made of snow, the key piece at the top being a large square slab. Our dwelling was about sixteen feet in diameter and seven in height, with a passage of about twenty feet, of sufficient height to allow a person to creep in on his knees, having a small chamber at the end.

While four of the men were engaged in building our hut, two others set off into the interior, and soon returned with a large piece of fresh-water transparent ice which was placed over the door to serve as a window.

The whole was completed within an hour, and a very comfortable abode it was when lined with skins of bears and deer. We judged from the advancing temperature, however, that it would not last very long.

After we had been settled in our abode, our hosts invited us to come into one of their huts of still larger dimensions to enjoy a banquet, as we understood by the signs they made. Not wishing to offend them we accepted their invitation, though we would gladly have remained away.

The hut was crowded, and we could barely find



sitting-room. A large mass of meat and blubber from a walrus which had just before been caught, was placed in the centre, when our friends, seating themselves, cut off long strips of blubber, and applied the ends to their mouths. It was wonderful to see the enormous quantity they swallowed, cutting off with their knives the portion they were unable to engulf between their teeth. With smiles they invited us to imitate their example.

Hungry as we were, it was some time before we could bring ourselves to put the horrible morsels into our mouths ; but, finding that we were not likely to get any other sort of food, we at length managed to eat a few small pieces, our hosts appearing as much astonished at the smallness of our appetites as we were at the huge quantities of the oleaginous food they managed to consume.

After eating a few pieces, we overcame the nausea we had at first felt, and contrived to get down a tolerable meal. For an hour or more our hosts continued eating, when each took a draught of some greasy looking soup which had been boiling over the lamp in the centre of the hut. It was offered to us, but we preferred some plain water which had been produced from snow melted over their lamp.

Observing that we declined to take any more of their dainty fare, they made signs that they intended to go to sleep, by stripping off their outer garments and stretching themselves on the skin-covered couches which surrounded the hut. We gladly took the hint, and retired to our own abode, which, although very much colder than the one we left, had a decided



advantage in being free from the horrible odour pervading the other. When our door was closed our lamp soon brought the temperature up to a comfortable warmth, and we slept with a sense of security we had not for long enjoyed.

The next day we tried to induce our hosts to accompany us to the south. They could understand our signs, but had evidently made up their minds not to go. They were very friendly, however, and allowed us to move about as we pleased. We, being unwilling to become a burden to them, determined if possible to kill a bear, or a deer, or walrus should we fail to find any of the former animals. We accordingly started off with our guns, leaving our packs behind us to show that we intended to return.

As the country to the southward appeared less rugged than that to the north, we proceeded in the former direction, but found after a short time that we could make but slow progress, so we descended to the ice, intending to strike inland should we observe no more practicable country. We had not proceeded far, however, before a heavy snow-storm came on, which not only obliterated our tracks, but shut out even the land from our sight.

"We shall be wise to turn back," observed Ewen, "for if we don't we may easily become bewildered."

I agreed with him, and we at once determined to retrace our steps. We walked on and on, supposing that we had the land on our left side. The ice was tolerably level. We fancied that we had gone far enough to reach the Esquimaux settlement. Still,



A BANQUET OF BLUBBER.



though we listened attentively, we could not hear the voices of the inhabitants. We had scarcely taken note of time, and we now, somewhat to our dismay, found that it was rapidly growing dark. We hurried on, every now and then uttering a shout in the expectation of hearing a reply. No reply came, however, and we arrived at the alarming conclusion that we should have to spend the night on the barren shore. To reach it we turned to the left, but after going on some distance, we still failed to see the cliffs.

"We must stop here, for I can go no further," exclaimed Ewen. "It would be better to build a hut than to wander about and at last perish with cold."

I agreed with him, and although without any instruments save the butts of our rifles, from which we withdrew the charges, we commenced operations. As there was by this time abundance of snow, we were not long in forming a hut of sufficient size to hold us both, either lying down or sitting up. It would at all events prevent us being frozen to death; though there was the risk, should the snow continue to fall, that we might be buried alive. To prevent this, we agreed that one of us should sit up and keep open a hole by thrusting through it the barrel of a rifle.

After I had had my sleep, Ewen roused me up. Endeavouring to keep awake I every now and then seized my rifle and thrust the barrel through the hole, when I was startled by hearing a creature scratching away at the entrance of our hut. That it was a bear I had no doubt, and should the animal succeed in breaking in, it might seize one or both of us, as, lying

down with our weapons unloaded, we should be completely at its mercy.

I roused up Ewen and advised him to reload his rifle while I did the same, and I hoped that we should have time to shoot the intruder, before he could seize us. We were, however, completely in the dark, though I expected to get sight of our assailant directly it had torn away the front of the hut.

"Perhaps if we shout we may drive it off," said Ewen.

I agreed with him, and we together raised our voices, but scarcely had we done so than they were replied to by a loud bark, while the scratching was continued with increased vehemence.

"Why, that must be a dog!" cried Ewen.

"And I know the voice," I said; "it is that of Bruno, our own St. Bernard."

I called his name, when I was answered by a peculiar bark and whine of recognition.

No sooner had we arrived at this conclusion than, seconding the efforts of the dog, we soon made an opening in the snow, and Bruno crept in and began licking our faces and uttering barks to show his delight.

"He must have scented us out in spite of the snow, and followed us here," I exclaimed. "Can our shipmates be near?"

That such was the case we had little doubt, and we agreed that should Bruno show a wish to conduct us, we would accompany him. Scarcely had we resolved on this, than Bruno ran out of the hut, and then came back pulling at our trousers and leaving no doubt as

to his intentions. We therefore kept up alongside him as fast as we could move. He regulated his pace to suit ours, otherwise in his delight he would evidently have bounded away before us. At length, however, through the still falling snow, we caught sight of what we concluded was the land, though in the indistinct light we could not be certain that it was not a berg.

We shouted, expecting to hear a reply from our shipmates; but, instead, a voice answered which we knew to be that of an Esquimaux. Presently we found ourselves at the village we had left. Several of our friends came out of their huts, uttering exclamations of surprise at Bruno, and driving back their dogs, who began furiously barking at him. He had evidently conducted us to the nearest human habitations. Still we were convinced that Sandy's party could not be far off.

As verbal explanations were impossible, we tried to show by signs that we had lost our way, and that the dog had found us. They then, guessing that we must be starving, brought us a large piece of walrus flesh, the greater portion of which, as may be supposed, we afterwards bestowed on our faithful dog, who crept after us into our hut. Having eaten enough of the meat to satisfy the cravings of hunger, we lay down and were soon fast asleep. In the morning I was awakened by hearing the loud sound of the rending and crashing of ice. On looking out I saw that the part of the ice on which we had wandered was separated from that attached to the shore, and was, with all the pieces beyond, in violent commo-

tion. Had we remained on it a few hours longer, we should inevitably have perished.

Our friends seemed highly pleased. We saw them preparing their harpoons and lines. Some dark objects appeared on the edge of the ice, and several of them immediately started off, one of whom we followed, keeping, however, at some distance, so as not to interfere with his proceedings.

The objects we had seen were walruses. Though they immediately afterwards slid off into the water, the Esquimaux continued his course towards the spot with his eyes fixed on the water. He stopped; we saw him lift his harpoon, and immediately afterwards the head of a huge walrus appeared above the surface. It was but for a moment. The hunter darted his weapon with all his force, and then unwound a long line which he carried on his shoulder. With wonderful dexterity he played the monster as a fisherman does the salmon he has hooked. Sometimes the creature dived, and at others came up to the surface and looked as if he intended to get on the ice and charge his enemy, but the hunter retreated, keeping his line taut.

The hunter, seeing we were watching his proceedings, made a sign to us to approach. As I did so, having my rifle in my hand, I fired, and the shot entering the creature's head its struggles ceased. The Esquimaux, highly delighted, thanked me for the assistance I had given him. It was not until several of his companions arrived that we were able to haul the walrus upon the ice. Soon afterwards Ewen shot another in the same manner, thus raising us high in



**HUNTING THE WALRUS.**



the estimation of our hosts. The other hunters were equally successful, and there was great rejoicing in the village at the abundance of meat which had been brought on shore.

Several kayacks were now brought out of a hut, where they had been sheltered during the winter, and, being carried over the ice, were launched into the open water. They were made of skins and entirely covered over, with the exception of a small hole large enough to admit a man's legs and the lower part of his body. Each hunter was provided with a double paddle and harpoon. To the harpoon was attached by a line a float made of a leathern bag inflated with air.

One end of the harpoon line was secured just below it, the other end being made fast to the head of the harpoon. About half-a-dozen hunters had taken their seats, for they had observed, what we had not, a whole shoal of seals not far off. They immediately made chase. We eagerly watched their proceedings. Presently the seals came to the surface, when the Esquimaux, paddling on, soon got into their midst. The harpoon being darted, the shaft, which was shaken out of the head, was allowed to be towed with the float after the seal.

One after the other the hunters launched their weapons, and the seals were seen swimming away in a vain endeavour to escape. The nimble kayacks quickly overtook them, and the second harpoon seldom failed to wound them mortally. Although they sank on being killed, the floats served to show where they had gone down. One of the most wonderful parts of the performance was the way in which the Esquimaux





hauled up the big seals and placed their bodies across their canoes ; when, singing songs of triumph, they returned to the ice, where friends stood by to take possession of their prey.

Without even getting out of their canoes, they again darted off, and few returned without another seal.

When we expressed our admiration of their kayacks, our friends showed us several wonderful feats which they could perform in them. Two of them started off together, one at right angles to the other, and almost in a moment, without upsetting, the latter forced his canoe directly over it. We saw a still more extraordinary feat. A man, having secured himself tightly in his canoe with an apron fastened round his body, with a blow of his paddle upset it, and with another brought it right again ; and thus he continued, turning round and round full twenty times or more, so rapidly, that we could just catch sight of his paddle in the air before it disappeared.

Our friends had another kind of boat which they called an "oomiak." It was straight-sided, flat, and square-ended. The framework was made of whale-bone and covered over with seal-skin, almost transparent. It was three feet deep, about twenty-five long, and eight wide. It was propelled by two paddles, while an old man sat with another paddle in the stern to steer. On seeing this primitive sort of boat, the idea struck us that by its means we might be conveyed southward. We tried by every means in our power to induce our friends either to lend us one or to go with us.

We had already promised them our rifles, the value

of which was greatly increased now that they had seen their power. They had also taken a great fancy to Bruno, and they at length gave us to understand that, if we would make him over to them and give them a couple more rifles with powder and shot, they would convey us as far as we wished to go.

We were sorry to have to part with Bruno, but, at the same time, we were convinced that he would be perfectly happy and well-fed in the realms of snow, where he might revel to his heart's delight.

We accordingly started the next morning with two men to paddle, and a third to steer. The boat was also fitted with a very short mast, stepped in the fore-part, and a sail composed of the intestines of the walrus split open so as to form strips about four inches wide. These strips were sewn together, and thus made a sail of great strength and lightness. When the wind was favourable we were able to hoist it, and it drove the oomiak along at a far greater speed than I should have supposed possible.

The people allowed us to take our rifles, having no doubt, apparently, that we would give them up at the end of the voyage. The whole tribe stood ready on the ice to see us off, and vociferously uttered their farewells, which we returned in like manner.

The weather was remarkably fine, and, although icebergs and floes innumerable covered the surface of the water, we had no difficulty in making our way between them. When one floe approached another, we with ease jumped out and carried our light boat beyond the power of our assailant. As we proceeded the floes became fewer and fewer, and we made more



THE KAYACK.

rapid progress. At night we either landed on the shore or on a fixed floe, and, creeping under the oomiak, slept on our bear-skins.

We harpooned a couple of seals and shot a bear, which afforded us abundance of food. We were standing along the shore one evening when, under a cliff, what was our astonishment to see a light. The Esquimaux were inclined to avoid the place; for, pulling away, evidently alarmed, they assured us that the spot would not afford comfortable camping-ground.

We, however, were anxious to ascertain by what the light was produced, feeling certain that some person must be on the shore who was making a signal. At last we persuaded them to turn the boat's head towards the beach.

As we approached, what was our astonishment to see a man standing at the mouth of a cave, and holding a torch which, in his eagerness, as we drew near, he flung into the air.

"Who are you?" shouted Ewen.

"An Englishman," was the answer.

We quickly leaped on the beach, and the stranger, advancing to meet us, stretched out his hands.

"Thank Heaven you have come, for I was very near perishing," he exclaimed. "My powder and shot were expended, and I had consumed the last remnant of the meat of the last deer I had killed."

I replied that we had sailed in the *Hardy Norseman*, that she had been lost on the ice, and that we had been separated from our companions.



RESCUED.



"Why, that ship belonged to Dundee, the port I sailed from in the *Barentz*."

"Are you, then, her surgeon, David Ogilvy?" I asked in a trembling voice.

"I am," he answered.

"Then I am your younger brother," was my reply, and we threw ourselves into each other's arms.

After recovering ourselves, I introduced Ewen, when my brother invited him and the Esquimaux into his cavern. Though the entrance was small, the interior was of considerable size, and had been made habitable by means of skins and the wreck of the very sloop in which he had escaped. Most of her crew, he told us, had left her in search of walruses, when a storm arose, and she was driven among the ice on to the coast, the remainder of his people perishing. He had providentially been able to save two rifles and all the ammunition on board, together with the larger part of her provisions. After finding shelter in the cavern, he had discovered a path which led to the heights above. From thence he had been able to make excursions into the interior, where he found reindeer and musk-oxen in considerable numbers, together with mosses and several herbs, with the qualities of which being acquainted he was able to vary his food.

The next morning we loaded the oomiak with as many of the skins as she could carry, and proceeded on our voyage. To our disappointment we found our further progress stopped by a large field of ice, which had been driven against the shore or had remained fixed to it since the winter. We must either cross it

—and it might extend for several miles, besides being covered with hummocks—or we must paddle out seawards and try to get round it. The latter proceeding did not appear to suit the ideas of the Esquimaux. Rather than be delayed, however, they consented to make the attempt, as we persuaded them that a passage might be found further out. After we had gone a short distance, on looking seaward, great was our astonishment to catch sight of a flag. Presently afterwards we saw some dark dots on the floe, which had apparently come in contact with the field of ice at present impeding our progress.

“Can it be possible that those are our shipmates?” exclaimed Ewen.

“I have no doubt about it,” I answered. “I see three persons; perhaps they are Sandy, Croil, and Hans. I trust that the poor fellows have escaped.”

To make sure I fired off my rifle, when the shot was replied to, though the sound but faintly struck our ears. The Esquimaux had now not the slightest hesitation of paddling out.

As we drew nearer other figures appeared who came to the edge of the floe. Among them was my brother Andrew.

“It is our crew. The whole have escaped then,” exclaimed Ewen, as we made him out.

To our infinite satisfaction, Sandy himself was the next person we distinguished, and several others who had seen the oomiak came hurrying across the ice.

I have not time to describe the meeting of us three brothers, thus so wonderfully preserved and reunited. Sandy had come upon the floe while for a short time

it remained fixed to the land-ice, and had arranged to return the next morning to rescue us, when, to his dismay, he found that it was in motion, and that any communication with the land was impossible. The boats, being damaged, were unfit at present to be launched, but the carpenters were very busily employed in repairing them. It was the captain's intention to land as soon as they could get opposite the settlement of Friedrichsthal, should the floe hold together so long, or, should its disruption be threatened, to make the voyage in the boats. We, of course, were willing to share the fortunes of our friends.

On returning to the oomiak we bestowed the rifles and ammunition we had promised on the honest Esquimaux, to which we added several other articles of a sort they valued.

David, Ewen, and I were cordially welcomed by the captain, Sandy, and the rest of the crew, who appeared to have suffered little from their long exposure on the floe. The wreck of the *Hardy Norseman*, however, had broken off and gone to the bottom. We had now the boats alone to depend upon. Scarcely had the Esquimaux taken their departure and paddled away than the floe began to move. As it did so I could not help seeing our perilous position, for at any moment it might drive against a berg, which might topple over and crush us. The wind, too, which had until now been favourable, changed, and there appeared great probability of our being again driven northward. Two days had thus passed, when the look-out, who was stationed at a flag-staff on the top of a hummock, shouted,

"A sail, a sail!"

All hands quickly joined him, when we beheld the joyful sight of a ship standing towards us, some way



to the southward. She could not possibly fail, we thought, to see our flag. We were not mistaken. On she came. As if to hasten her progress, some of us fired off our guns, others shouted. Several of the men

danced and clapped their hands, and others wept and rushed into each other's arms. Then, as the ship approached and began to shorten sail, we ran down to the side of the floe on which she was approaching, and waved our caps and cheered. As the floe was steady, she glided up alongside, and threw her ice-anchors on to it.

"She's the *Barentz*!" exclaimed David, "though her appearance has changed greatly for the better since I last saw her."

The *Barentz* she was. Having been refitted, she had been the first ship to sail from Dundee in search of us, her captain calculating that, having escaped with our lives, we should be found not far off from the spot where providentially he had fallen in with us.

The remaining stores and skins, together with those belonging to my brother, and everything of value, were quickly hoisted on board, and the *Barentz*, having already caught several whales, before long obtained a full ship. Her head was then turned southward, and, after all our wonderful adventures and hairbreadth escapes, we reached in safety the port of Dundee.

THE END.

